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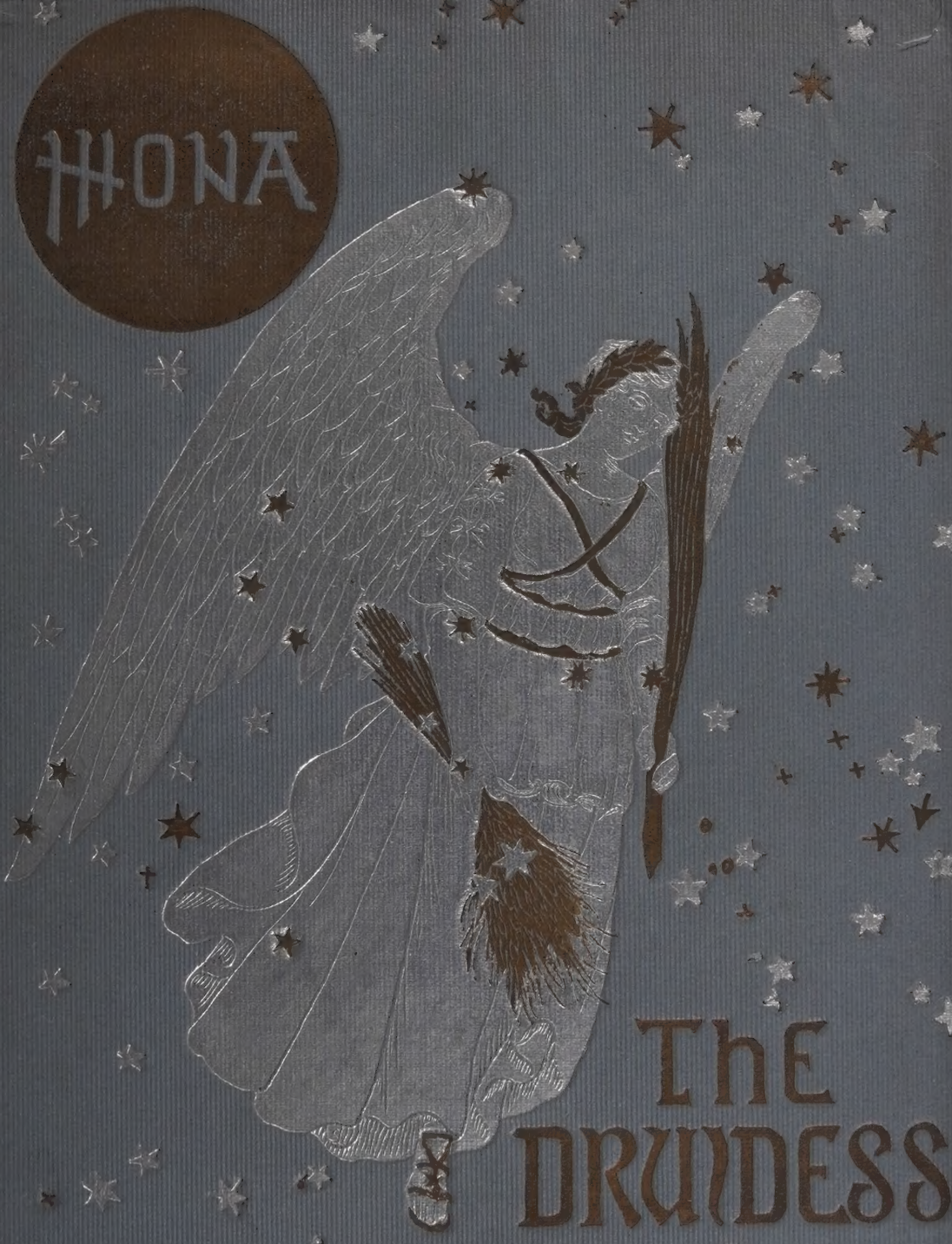

The Druidess

A. K. HOPKINS

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1904
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Aunt Josie
from
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KIMBELINE'S MOUNT, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, ENGLAND

MONA THE DRUIDESS:

OR

The Astral Science of Old Britain.

BY

ALICE K. HOPKINS,

AUTHOR OF "A DAUGHTER OF THE DRUIDS."

ILLUSTRATIONS AND COVER DESIGN BY
VICTOR Q. SEARLES

Boston
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1904

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TO

MY FRIEND

"Morien,"

IN REMEMBRANCE OF PLEASANT HOURS SPENT TOGETHER

IN STARRY HIGHWAYS.

The author would here acknowledge her indebtedness to a work entitled "Queens before the Conquest," for the historical accuracy of the period embraced.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Brigantes, or primitive inhabitants of Britain, held the celebrated district called Brigantia, which extended from the Humber to the present borders of Scotland. History states that the peculiar location and dense forest of this mountainous region rendered it almost inaccessible.

"In the year of our Lord 43, and in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, the widely extended tribes of the Brigantes occupied the entire island from the Eastern to the Western sea, reaching from the Humber doubtless to the Firth of Forth."

The numerous tribes called the Brigantes included many smaller ones which belonged to, or were dependent on them. The Brigantes are now known to have been the descendants of the earlier inhabitants of Britain, the original possessors of the soil, who had been driven northward by successive invasions. This brave, hardy and adventurous people were distinguished above every other British tribe for their love of liberty.

History affirms that Cæsar never came in contact with this tribe, therefore what he says of the Britons of his time cannot apply to them. He was acquainted only with the southeastern part of the Island, and knew nothing of the people who held its mountain-fastnesses.

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The name of Britain is said to be derived from the *Thracian* word *Briga*, signifying Breast. In this fact we find internal evidence of the origin of the early Keltic possessors of the soil of Britain.

We shall attempt to show why this remnant of an ancient people should have called themselves by this name, and why their laws were, and still are, called "breast-laws."

"Centuries later the descendants of the Brigantes were associated under the term 'Kymry,' signifying the original owners of the soil; and a bond of brotherhood was established between them which was unique in history. The territory occupied by this people bears to this day the name of 'Kymry-land.' The 'Kymry' were those Keltic Britons who preserved the traditions and teachings of the *Titanaides*."

In the following story we make use of the titles in vogue among this people, that starry blazonry from which all heraldic devices had their origin.

"The marks of the Britons called by Tertullian *Britanorum-Stigmata* may be regarded as a personal species of heraldry. These symbols were often burned in upon the body, and were also recognized in the patronymic."

The cognomen of *Arthog*, the Bear, which we have given the chief of the Brigantine clans, was a name that among the ancient Kelts implied one versed in the use of the war chariot, the warrior who, running out on the pole of his chariot, could charge and retreat in this manner.

The title of Arthog was given to him only who had proven worthy of this blazonry. He must also have been born when the sun was in the constellation of the "Bear," Ursa Major, whose chariot or wain is ever circling about the pole of the heavens.

This constellation which never sets, but is always in apparition wheeling about that mystic circle in the heavens called the pole, was anciently termed "Arthur's Wain"; and the chief who could most dexterously use the pole of his chariot in those circling charges upon the enemy was alone considered worthy in Arthur's wars to bear the Hero's name.

The religious system of the ancient Kelts had entirely to do with the starry cosmogony. *Arth* was the Keltic term for Bear.

The movements of the Sun through the great starry circle, or zodiacal wheel, in whose radius the whole solar system revolves, was to the ancients representative of man's progress through the great cycle, or precessional period.

The world has to day a sensual or material apprehension only of the great truths which the heavens are telling.

Davies in his "British Antiquities" affirms that Britain was the rich source of Druidical learning to all of continental Europe. The same writer recommends to the attention of the learned the ancient declaration that—"The Chair of the Preserver is here, and here it shall continue till the doom."

The period when Christianity was introduced into Britain is unknown, for the simple reason that the most ancient rites and ceremonies which had their rise in the starry science are incorporated into all Christian worship to-day.

That Christianity was not planted in Britain in its Romanized period is amply proven, for temples to the gods of Rome were as thickly scattered over Britain as were the Roman camps and towns.

The so-called legendary history of Britain rests chiefly on the Latin chronicle of Geoffrey of Mon-

mouth who is believed to have translated an old manuscript brought over from *Bretagne*.

This was written in correspondences which the British historian either did not understand, or saw fit not to explain to a material age in which the knowledge of the divine science was lost.

It is from the old Latin Chronicler we get the tradition of the way in which the birth of the Nazarene was received in Britain, and in the quaint phraseology of the historian.

"In the reign of *Kimbelin the Keen* who was King of Britain, there came on earth a maiden's Son born in Bethlehem, of the best of all Maidens. He is named Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost of all worlds the treasure.

"In Kimbelin's day there lived here in Britain a man named *Taliesen*, and very marvelous things followed him, so that the people esteemed him for a prophet because of the wise things that he said. They always found it sooth what he foretold The King sent for *Taliesen* and said—'There is come to this land marvelous tidings of the birth of a little child. Great and strong are the awe-tokens in the stars, in the moon and in the sun; and the writs are come to me, and I would know of Thee what this meaneth; to what it will tend?'

"Then *Taliesen* answered, 'It was of yore said, and the sayings are now sooth, that a child should be born of a Virgin, and of all folk chosen; and that he should be called the Saviour of the world. He should fulfil all prophecy, and release his people from their bonds. In sooth he should bring freedom to the whole race of man.'

"When the King heard this he was very joyful, and caused the good tidings to be proclaimed throughout his kingdom."

The Seer *Taliesen* figures in various periods of British history because the name signifies the "Radiant-browed," or "The Illuminated One."

The passing of the twelve zodiacal constellations across that point of the heavens where the celestial equator and the ecliptic intersect each other furnished to the ancient world the *Sign* of the age.

If the Breast-sign *Cancer* was crossing this point they knew that period to be the Breast-age. Here man quenched his thirst at Nature's fountain. The many-breasted Diana was the personification of the principle here expressed.

If the starry *Bull*, or the *Ram*, were crossing this mystic point in the heavens, the ancients recognized the symbol of their age in these hieroglyphics. Hence Egypt and Greece as well as Britain knew their place in the great cycle. Egypt and Greece were the Head of the Grand-Body, expressing the principle of the cerebellum and cerebrum. The dominance of the Head was their cyclic manifestation. This is proven in infinite correspondences.

The World-Year of the ancients was the precessional period of twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand years. This included the twelve cycles of over two thousand years each in which the sun makes his stately progress through the twelve signs of the ecliptic.

That each sign expresses a functional principle of the human organism the heavens are telling.

The movements of the great zodiacal wheel with its twelve mystic emblems, and their thirty-six *decans*, or parts, were the foundation of the ancient science of correspondences.

The key to this celestial science is found in the figure of the Zodiacal-Man of the old almanacs

with the twelve signs about his person. "This symbol is of unknown origin, and unsearchable antiquity."

The scholars of our age have regarded this figure as having no significance, but God ever uses "the simple things, yea, and the things that are despised, to confound the wise and prudent."

We are told that Egypt cared far more to know just where she was in the great cycle than any other astronomical fact. The period of her *greatness* was while the starry Bull, *Taurus*, was passing the equinoctial colure.

The Scriptures declare that these lights in the firmament were "for signs and for seasons and for days and years." But one of the tribulations pronounced upon erring man, was that—"The sun should be darkened in his going forth, and the constellations should not give their light." These have been indeed fulfilled in our own age.

The religious system of the Keltic Britons was known as Druidism, and its priests as "Tree Sages." "The shadowy oak glades formed their college halls, and these are said to have been thronged with noble youth who devoted many years to the study of those Nature-Mysteries which were the foundation of Druidism."

"There are very authentic testimonies concerning the learning of the ancient Britons, especially among the Druids. Even the Romans affirmed them to be a wise and knowing people, who had from of old been much celebrated for their attainments in the most solid and useful parts of philosophy. They were accredited with the learning of Phœnicia and Egypt."

"The order of Druids embraced the most noble families. Their students were educated for the

sacred offices with incredible vigilance and care. Their studies embraced the most elevated objects. The nature of the Deity, of the human soul, of the future state and of the heavenly bodies."

"Their conceptions were sublime, and their speculations comprehensive. Under a variety of names they acknowledged one God, the maker of all things. They taught the immortality of the soul, moral responsibility and recompense after death. They observed and enjoined the most rigid justice in their decisions and dealings with mankind."

"*Dinas Bran*," or the "Castle of the Raven," an ancient fortress in Wales, is frequently alluded to in the following pages. "The early history of this castle is merged in profound oblivion. The researches of the most astute historians have completely failed to discover its origin. It is, however, conjectured to have been built by the Britons prior to the time of our Saviour."

"Kimbelin* the Keen," or the Druid King of Britain (Cymbeline of Shakespeare's drama), bears in history the names of *Cunobeline* and also *Conobelinus* its Latinized form. That gold was coined in his reign we have ample proof in the tribute money paid to Cæsar, and also in the famous Camden coins, some of which bear the stamp of this king.

One of the royal residences of this monarch in Buckinghamshire is described in the following terms: "No remains of antiquity can perhaps better convey to the mind the choice of situation selected by our early ancestors for the abode of monarchy than that spot amidst the Chiltern Hills. Here still appears a high circular mound or keep, in circumference about eighty paces, known to the present day as

* Cynvelin, the Welsh form.

Kimble's Castle; while a little adjoining village bears the same king's name, in defiance of the wreck of time and the lapse of centuries."

This British fortress is said to have commanded an almost boundless prospect of surpassing beauty.

The name *Caractacus*, which occurs frequently in the following pages, has to do with the hero of Britain, the son of Cadallan and brother of Boadicea. "It is rather remarkable that two princes should have been conspicuous at the same time in our annals, each bearing the name of *Caractacus;* one the son, and the other the stepson of *Cadallan* and *Cartismandua*."

"The adventures of Arthur and his Knights, which were during so many ages popular throughout nearly all the countries of Europe, appear to be involved in impenetrable mystery."

Writers have always confounded the great world-epic with the historical remains of that Prince Arthur whose deeds were claimed to be analogous with the Arthur of the great epic. That a Prince of this name did in the sixth century establish the order of the "Knights of the Round Table" proves a knowledge of the starry lore to have been still extant.

This has given the historical Arthur the undying fame which has followed him down the ages. In other words, making him the rival of that Arthur whose glorious deeds were the theme of that great cyclic epic written in the starry hieroglyphics.

As some writer of our own time has said—"Arthur has left an undying name, while a nonentity in history."

The "Knights of the Round Table" were pledged to seek the Sangreal—that sacred chalice, a pure heart, of which the starry *Grail* was the symbol.

The myths in regard to the Grail, its appearance and disappearance; and the wondrous magic of its presence, all have their roots in the starry teaching.

That the Grail contained the *sacred blood* was taught in the Druidical rites long prior to the birth of the Nazarene. This fact has stamped them as "bloody rites" by the materialistic thinkers of our day.

MONA THE DRUIDESS.

CHAPTER I.

"BRIGA, hast thou heard the strange tale which has reached the court, that a Man-child has been born of a Maiden than whom there is none of higher repute in the land?"

"Nay, husband, I have not heard such a tale, but what is there marvelous in it? Do we not know that, 'Great Arthur' is to come again through a re-birth? Are not our people always looking for His return, and for the 'Golden Age,' which He will again bring in?"

"Wife, thou sayest truth; but there is, it seemeth, much marveling in all lands over the appearance of this 'Maiden's Son,' for great tokens of His strength are declared to be seen in the stars. This is thought the more strange as he cometh of no kingly line. The *Magi*, though, affirm Him to be of royal birth because He is of the heavenly, or celestial, genesis. All the signs, they say, are fulfilled in Him.

"The King also hath received many writs bearing on the matter, for it appeareth that great and disturb-

ing omens are attached to this birth; and because of these the King hath called in the Seer *Taliesen* to make known to him their import."

"And what sayeth the radiant-browed Seer? He surely can tell our good King the meaning of this marvel. The advent of a Maiden's Son, of the celestial genesis, may well bring omens in the stars."

Briga had spoken with a pathos which did not escape her husband, for she had been a wife more than a twelvemonth, but the joy of prospective motherhood was not yet hers.

"*Taliesen* declares this birth to be the fulfilment of Druidic prophecy. He affirms that it was foretold from of old by the very stars of heaven that a virgin should bring forth a Son. The great Seer says that the *Magi* have always prophesied such an advent."

"Yes, I mind me of such a prediction," said Briga thoughtfully. "He was to come when the great star *Spica*, in the constellation of the *Virgin* was on the prime meridian. Yes, and our priests assert that this symbol of divine motherhood has now reached its apex in the heavens." Briga's eyes filled with tears as she added: "It must be He. Oh the wonder of it!" musingly.

She presently, however, asked: "How taketh the King this matter?"

"Rumor hath it that he is very joyful since the great Seer finds all the signs fulfilled. In fact, so pleasured is he that he has caused the good news to be proclaimed throughout Britain."

"Arthog, the Bear," went on to commend the King's action in this matter, for "Kimbelin the Keen" was greatly beloved by his people, both for the goodness of his heart, and for the unexcelled wisdom of his reign. A sort of halo has come down the ages surrounding the name of this King, who history tells us, was from kings descended.

When her husband left the house, as he presently did, to communicate these tidings to the various clans over whom he was chief, Briga turned with a sigh to the work upon which she had been engaged. But her hand had lost its cunning, and the fine straws which she had been weaving into baskets lay unplaited in her fingers while she mused upon the ancient prediction, that "Great Arthur" was to come again through a re-birth. This woman in her simple faith in the old prophecies failed to grasp the fact that He who was to come was the synonym of a perfected race. That it is indeed only through multitudinous births that the divine genesis will ultimately come in, Immanuel, God with us. Well did Briga remember the first time she had heard this prophecy of Arthur's return. How her heart had swelled with the hope that hers might be that blessed motherhood which should restore to her people this Prince in whom all perfection lay. He who should conquer the world, and sway an undivided Kingdom. Had she not a right to this hope with other Keltic maidens? Briga had then asked herself.

Now it seemed He had indeed come, and her race had no lot or part in the matter, since He was not even of her Keltic line. But how did she know that this Prince was not of her race? Had not the Kelts been largely wanderers ever since their exodus from the "Summer country?" And had not the habitable world been called *Celtica* for them?

This Prince must be of her race since it was they who held the traditions of his glorious deeds. He would surely come to them who had so long regarded as sacred the prophecies concerning Him.

But why did not the very stones proclaim His advent? The face of nature was unchanged, as Briga noted, for she had gone to the open door in her fit of musing. It would have seemed to her in keeping that every inanimate thing should bear testimony to the coming of the great Conqueror, who was to break His people's bonds, and restore Nature to her pristine loveliness.

Briga felt no little pride in her stalwart husband, for Chieftain Arthog was of great repute among the clans. And did he not bear upon his shield the royal blazonry of the starry "Bear"? Any woman of her race would have felt it an honor to have been so mated.

But Briga was troubled. She had begun to fear that hers was no true marriage since Heaven did not bless her with offspring; for to be childless was a sore grief to a Keltic woman.

Stealing from her husband's side that night after

he was soundly sleeping, Briga sought her couch under the stars. Here the symphonies of nature, in which there is never a discord, soothed the unrest in her bosom. Lying prone upon the ground with her eyes fixed upon the constellation of the "Virgin" which was at the time declining, she invoked the Great Mother—that prolific principle in nature of which the "Virgin" is the starry type.

With Rachel's prayer upon her lips—"Give me children or else I die," Briga watched the great star *Spika*, whose brilliance paled all others near it. This star, called from time immemorial "The Promised Seed," and which is borne by the "Virgin," Briga knew to be that in which all the prophecies culminate. Her fascinated gaze was fixed upon it as the constellation slowly declined in the heavens.

Suddenly *Spika* dropped below the horizon. This star of the "Seed" had set; but as it disappeared from sight Briga sprang to her feet. "The Seed! the Seed!" she cried, "has come to earth! Happy augury. The Great Mother will make me fruitful." Then dropping down again upon the greensward she fell to musing upon the old teachings of this symbol. Naturally did the prophecies all point to the starry "Virgin." Would it not be the last sign on the ecliptic in the great cycle, ushering in the virgin motherhood of the race?

What did the term "virgin" mean but the wonderful possibilities of bearing? Hence man had

applied it to the virgin soil which yielded so richly to the husbandman; also to the virgin forests where man has not lawlessly entered.

The *fiction* of the constellations rising and setting is still kept up to-day; for while they really maintain their place in the starry dome, our planet is constantly changing its position toward *them*.

Thus to Briga's vision the great star of the "Virgin" seemed to set as it disappeared below her horizon. From this she augured an answer to her prayer. Had she not seen the "Seed" fall to earth? And was not this star called the "Promised Seed?" Heaven did not mock her. The stars were those bright messengers of truth which her people had always declared them. To the ancient Kelts every phenomenon of nature had a spiritual significance.

The years that followed saw Briga's hope fulfilled. The desire of her heart was granted, for children blessed her home. These brought both joy and sorrow, as two had tarried but a little time.

CHAPTER II.

More than three decades had rolled away since Briga's starry vigil. Three times ten times had the sun traversed the starry wheel in its yearly revolutions when a youth and a maiden meeting by the roadside held the following conversation:

"I am glad to see thee, Mistress Mona, for I have a question to ask thee. In fact I have more than one," the youth added.

"And I will answer thy question, Carac, if I have the wit." The speaker a tall, fair girl, who as if disdainful of covering, suddenly threw back the hood of the dark red cloak which draped her whole figure. This action revealed a brow of snowy whiteness, under which a pair of wondrously beautiful blue eyes met those of the youth with an expression at once gentle and vigilant.

"First, then, what is the foundation of the belief which has taken such a hold upon our people, that Arthur has come again?"

"Because He who has come fulfils the starry prophecy. His advent was long foreseen by the *Magi*. Every Great cycle witnesseth His appearing. But the people mistake," the maiden added, an

expression of pain crossing her features. "Arthur is not a person as personality is understood to-day; but perfected or regenerated man, the S-O-N. He who has come, the Maiden's 'Son,' is the great forerunner of the race, our Exemplar."

"I do not understand," replied the youth. "The people believe that Arthur himself has come again."

For a moment the maiden regarded her companion closely. Then with sudden vehemence she said, "How shall I declare unto you, who are not an Initiate, this mystery of the ages?

"Every *Great* cycle brings in this manifestation in the flesh. It is the promise of that divine manifestation for which the whole creation waiteth, that travail of Nature which is consummated in the sign of the *Virgin;* for Nature is always in travail with Arthur.

"Dost thou not know, Carac, that the starry 'Bear' is called the prototype of Arthur because this constellation never sets, but is always in apparition? In other words, Arthur's star never sets."

"Thou art right," the youth responded thoughtfully, "the constellation of the 'Bear' is too far north to go below the horizon. Is this the foundation of the legend that Arthur is suckled by the 'Great Bear' of the heavens?"

"Arthur is most certainly suckled by no other than the heavenly bear. Every cyclic revolution

of the pole ushers in the Divine Appearing—that celestial-bringing-forth which the Kelts termed Arthur."

"I catch something of thy meaning, Mona. That Arthur comes not of natural birth our legends have always taught. The ward of *Pendragon* he is termed in the starry allegory."

"Yes, since *Draco*, the dragon, keeps watch and ward over His Appearing. But the *Magi* alone are able to read this celestial allegory. They are first to announce the divine genesis, and to render that adoration which it ever calls forth."

"I perceive what thou meanest, Mona,—that the constellation termed the *Bear* is the symbol of the cyclic-harvest. Its other names, that of the *Great Plough*, and the *Wain*, seem to express this also."

"Didst thou ever consider why the 'Great' and the 'Lesser-Bear' are separated in the heavens by the Head of the starry '*Dragon*'?" Mona asked.

"No, I have never thought about it. What may its significance be?"

"The Head of the *Dragon* signifies dogma, doctrine. Canst thou see the correspondence here? Doctrine and dogma, are guarding the mysteries, so do they also separate and divide the natural and the spiritual. While our ancient legends affirm *Pendragon* to be the guardian of Arthur, they often represent him as hostile to the interests of his ward."

"I do remember that they seem to teach this, and

I am reminded by your words that the *Dragon* does not set, but, like the 'Bear,' it is always in apparition.

"Does this teach that doctrine, and dogma are always to occupy our zenith, or the prominent place they do to-day?"

"It would appear to imply this if thou wert indeed correct in saying the *Dragon* does not set. The fact is the time will come when this constellation will not as now occupy the zenith. The *Magi* have told us that the *Dragon* will slowly recede and decline in the heavens, eventually passing out of sight. Thus do the very stars affirm that dogma and doctrine will also decline and pass away when their work is done. Meanwhile they are the drapery of Truth, veiling and guarding from profanation the divine Mysteries."

"It seems then that every dragon-mound in Britain is bearing witness to this also," said Carac, who added thoughtfully: "Like the polar circle in the heavens these mounds are representative of the 'Round Table' of Arthur where the cyclic record is kept. I never thought of the old dragon mounds having any connection with the stars, for I did not associate them with the constellation '*Draco*.'"

"Yes, they are the *Dracontia* mounds of the ancient world, and they do, as thou sayest, keep the record of the Arthurian cycle. Even the form of these mounds is designed to show the coils into which man is brought through dogma, creed and

doctrine; for these *Dracontia* mounds portray the coils of the starry Dragon."

"Thou wert ever keen in penetration, Mona, for thine is a rare insight. But to change the subject. I have another question to ask thee. Art thou fully resolved to join the order of *Mylitta?* I would know this from thine own lips."

For a moment Mona did not reply. Then with a grave, sweet dignity she said: "We have gone over this ground before. Why dost thou ask this question now?"

"Because I would bid thee remember, ere it is too late, that the vows of *Mylitta* once taken must always hold thee. Art thou willing to forego entirely the ties of family; never to know the loving clasp of thy children's arms about thy neck, or the shelter of a husband's home and heart? Mona, I love thee, and I ask thee once again to be my wife."

Mona had been standing so near to Carac that the long, hanging sleeve of her cloak must have brushed his person in any chance movement, but at these last words she started back, putting the distance of several feet between them.

"I trusted thou wouldst never speak to me in this way again," she said in a grieved tone, her eyes reproachfully meeting his. "Thou shouldst know that I am as fully pledged to service in the temple as if all my vows were taken.

"Nature herself ordained me to the order of *Mylitta*, for she ushered me into life when the great

luminary was in the breast-sign *Cancer*. I was born one of *Mylitta's* Bees."

As her companion made no response to this, she continued more gently, or at least with less vehemence.

"I have considered well the deprivations of which thou speakest. I love my home, and I fully realize that the time may come when I shall have no ties of family; but I would sooner be a honey-gatherer, the busy Bee of *Mylitta*, than any wife or mother in the land."

"Dost know what thou art really doing, Mona?" For a moment the maiden was startled by the suppressed passion in her companion's voice. "Like the Keltic maidens of old thou art putting away the man because thou art looking for the angel."

The beautiful eyes of the maiden dropped to the ground for a moment, but her regal form dilated to its full proportions as she replied: "She who would bring forth of the spiritual and celestial marriage will not look for the angel in vain."

"Oh, Mona, thou art not thyself at all since going into the temple." Mona did not respond to this, and he added: "What hath so changed thy speech? Thou dost talk in riddles. What meanest thou by calling thyself a honey-gatherer?" then facetiously: "Thou wert the essence of sweetness before; thou didst not need to increase thy natural stock."

"Carac, thou knowest I did but speak in metaphor. We are not allowed to disclose our temple-teachings

THE ROADSIDE MEETING OF CARAC AND MONA

to those who would not understand. But surely thou shouldst know that honey is significant of celestial truth. The nebula of the *Beehive* in the sign *Cancer* is the symbol of our order. Why else do our priests offer honey in the sacred chalice upon the altar, but in recognition of its divine correspondence? In this sense it is the very nectar of the Gods—that ambrosial food, upon which the spirit feeds, because the latter can be sustained by truth only as the body is by food."

"But, Mona, is not natural marriage an honorable estate; one ordained from the very beginning? And are not devout women like thyself needed to bear children to this land whose ancient altar fires are so fast dying out? How better couldst thou serve the old faith than by bringing in sons and daughters, who, when thou art gone, would do their part to preserve the primal revelation which was our inheritance?"

"Carac, thou dost not understand, nor dost thou read aright the signs of our times. We need those to-day who will live, and die if need be, for the old faith. The time is near at hand when the ancient mysteries will be as an unsolved riddle, an unreadable enigma. Even now their spirit lingers only with the priest and devotee. Our Druidic monuments will be misunderstood, and our myths and allegories will be regarded as childish tales."

"But why should this be, if our priests are faithful to their office? They should instruct the people,

and not suffer them to lapse from the old teachings."

"Carac, you know not of what you speak. This is the period of the fleshly incarnation, hence the physical, rather than the spiritual, hold sway."

"Then by thine own statement our people should look well to the propagating of such sons and daughters as will defend our ancient altars," responded the youth quickly.

"Very true, as a people let us do this since the advent of Arthur will thereby be hastened. But our race while holding precious the legacy of mystery-teaching bequeathed us by the *Titans*, our forefathers, have not failed to do their part toward physical propagation, paying Nature's debt in continuing the species.

"Their sons and their daughters in the flesh, however, pass out like the sacrifices laid upon the altar; their ashes only remain. All mothers are not mothers in the flesh. I will bear in the subjective realm that my progeny may go down the ages to break the seals of truth for remote generations." After this neither spoke for a time, while the maiden seemed looking off into the dim futurity of which she had been speaking.

Suddenly a clamor had arisen in the valley below them, caused by a horseman dashing down from the hills carrying a bent bow which he presented at arm's length to the people as he passed. This was a declaration of war, and was so understood by all.

" The clans are in trouble again." Carac spoke as if the matter had little interest for him, perhaps from the frequency of these outbreaks.

" Yes, internal strife seems to be growing among our people. It used not to be so," Mona said musingly as if her thoughts were elsewhere. This, however, had evidently diverted her mind from the subject which had been under discussion, for she presently said :

" Since thou hast spoken to me of love and marriage, Carac," there is something I would tell thee. " Thou shouldst know that Mira has become very fond of thee. She is but a child in many things, though she has learned to love as a woman.

" Between thee and her a real marriage might be possible—that union of heart and mind which finds its correspondence in the divine marriage. I have lately learned that Mira has endowed thee with all the graces and virtues which the true woman finds in the man she loves."

" Mona, why hast thou told me this ? Thy sister can never be my wife. Thou art the only woman whom I have ever loved, and I have waited long and patiently, hoping thy heart would turn toward me." The youth spoke as if realizing the hopelessness of his suit.

" If thou art bent upon the celibate life, my dear brother, because the woman upon whom thy fancy has fallen is not ordained to be thy spouse, I would counsel thee to remember that thy soul may not

concur in the decision of thy head ; for the soul ever seeks its primeval union, and thou mayest yet meet her in the flesh who is thy true counterpart."

Carac looked the denial he did not speak, and presently his companion turned away with the ancient motto of her race upon her lips—" *Y Gwir yn Erbyn y Byd.*" " Truth against the world."

CHAPTER III.

A FEW moments afterward this Keltic maiden entered her home, a beehive-shaped structure whose walls were of solid masonry. This had once been white, but age with climatic changes had laid their marks upon its exterior; for the centuries had borne witness to the endurance of this structure.

The large living room into which Mona at once stepped showed huge oaken beams and rafters, for the oak was the sacred tree of the Kelts because of its symbolical expression. No domicile or temple was complete where the "Overshadowing Tree" was not found. Here lived the chief of the North Cumberland clans, "Arthog the Bear" and Briga his wife with their children, now grown to man and woman's estate.

As Mona entered her home, a woman of some fifty years, with the face of a Madonna in its chastened beauty, looked up from her work.

"So thou hast come at last, daughter," she said. "Thy father has been looking for thee since sundown. He has gone now to see the herdsman about sending the young stock up into the hill pasture."

"Yes, mammy, I have come at last as thou sayest,

but I left the temple at the usual hour. 'Carac of the Grail' detained me to have speech by the way, and I lingered talking with him. I am sorry daddy should have wanted me, and I not here. Did he tell thee why?"

"I think he wanted thee to use thy knacky fingers in the writing of a message." Briga had for a moment regarded her daughter almost as she might a visitant from another world, for an unearthly radiance lighted up the fair face, enhancing the charm of its exalted mien.

Mona had not closed the door on her entrance, and having answered her mother's greeting she stepped out into the flood of moonlight which filled the opening.

"Luna is in all her *arkite* beauty to-night, mother. Her light seems to touch with a hallowed radiance everything in nature," the maiden added, as if loath to lose sight of the scene without.

The elder woman had dropped the lambskin upon which she had been at work, and had joined her daughter at the open door.

"Thou didst always see more in the moon than other people, my child," she said tenderly, gazing with all a mother's fondness into the starlike eyes that now beamed with more than their wonted light.

"Yes, but only lately have I understood why our Druids have always held the moon to be a symbol of the *Ark*—that principle of mind which preserves

AN ARKITE REMINISCENCE

man from the floods of error which ever sweep down upon him.

"In the crescent we have the symbol of the non-illuminated mind, which has turned away from its Great Luminary. But in the full orb of night we find the type of that order of mentality which fully reflects the deific or light-giving principle. Is it not so, mammy?"

"Yes, my daughter, this is the ancient teaching. We know that the moon's monthly conjunction with the sun precedes its renewal of light, for its waxing is the result of this conjunction. So with man, his spiritual light is waxing or waning in accordance with his mental attitude towards his true Luminary. When his full enlightenment shall have come in, moons shall wax and wane no more."

"Yes, because then Arthur will have come, and man will fully reflect the Light as in the beginning," was Mona's response.

"In the *Arkite* mysteries," Briga continued, "we are shown that Luna's phases teach the natural decline and renewal of man's mental light, because of his sense-environment. It is only as the moon *rises* that it illuminates the night. When it fully reflects the sun we have the type of the fully illuminated mind, which, as you said a moment since, gives a hallowed radiance to everything in nature; as the latter is but the mirror of the spiritual."

"So this is the reason that our Druid priests

wear the symbol of the increscent moon upon their robes," suggested Mona.

"Yes, the increscent moon is typical of spiritual renewal—that mental illumination which enables man to *rise* above his sensuous environment."

"I see, mammy, man's natural light, his merely sensuous view of things, must wane, as does the moon's light, ere his conjunction with his great Luminary is effected." And Mona continued: "When the moon is increscent as now in the sign *Cancer*, and in the *decan* of *Argo*, the sacred *Ship*, my mind always seems to be more than usually illuminated. To-day for the first time in my life I felt that I understood the arkite allegory. So many of its correspondences came home to me.

"One or two of these impressed me very much while some illustrations were being given in the class this morning, for instance: 'The moon is said to have no light of its own, and because of the sacred science we know it has none; neither indeed has man.' Both reflect just so much from their Great Illuminator as their attitude toward the same allows.

"Then again, the moon always tends earthward, but is upheld and supported by the powerful attraction of the sun. So does the mind of man always tend earthward, and maintains any equilibrium only as it is drawn upward by the spirit (its Sun)."

"I perceive, my daughter, it is through the celestial science of correspondences that thou hast come

into a knowledge which makes all nature pregnant with meaning."

Luna had passed below the highest spur of the Cumberland range, and was throwing a gigantic shadow of the mountain upon surrounding nature when mother and daughter, a few moments later, entered their dwelling.

Here Mona began at once preparing cakes for their supper. These she made of acorn mast and goat's milk, and the maiden showed herself expert in their preparation. While these were baking upon the hearth she had set out on the deal table such earthen dishes as would be required at this meal. That her thoughts were not wholly upon her occupation was evident from the preoccupied air with which she moved about the room.

After turning her cakes that they might brown evenly, Mona seated herself by the fireside to be in readiness to remove them when done. Then it was that it occurred to her to tell her mother of the conversation she had that evening with their neighbor, "Carac of the Grail"; and to ask a certain question which this interview had suggested. This was in regard to the old prophecies of Arthur's return.

"I am not wise in the starry lore, my daughter," was Briga's reply; "but I know it was declared from of old that a Virgin should bring forth a Son, and that the same should be a King whose kingdom should never cease.

"Our people understood this prophecy to be profoundly arcane. While it was to have a literal fulfilment, it also meant to them far more than the advent in the flesh of a virgin-born child. That it referred to a spiritual kingdom to come in through such an advent there can be no doubt, since earthly kingdoms, we know, must pass away."

"Yes, mother, I can well see that, for does not the constellation of the *Virgin* teach this celestial advent? It is no single personality or individuality as the world understands this term; but that divine S-O-N of whose body all mankind are members. Every great cycle of the sun's course through the twelve signs of the zodiac witnesseth to such an advent, first in the flesh, and, finally, in the spirit. Hence we are to-day looking for the return of Arthur.

"We are taught that she who bears the 'Promised Seed' is the starry Virgin. This is the last symbol of each great cycle. Here Nature consummates her work. In this last sign of the cycle, physical propagation and the divine incarnation are at one. The prophecy of this dates back to the origin of the great starry scheme.

"The advent of the wonderful child of whom thou hast often told me, mother, and in whom our people believed the prophecies fulfilled must have taken place when *Spika*,* the great star of the *Seed* was on

* Nineteen hundred years ago the constellation *Virgo* was passing this point.

the ecliptic, passing the prime meridian. The *Magi* at least knew when to look for the celestial genesis."

While Mona was speaking, her mother's thoughts had traversed the years back to the night when, a childless woman, she had held that vigil under the stars. Had she not seen the great star of augury descend to earth even while her eyes were fixed upon it? And had she not read its import aright as an answer to her prayer? Now was it any wonder that her child should be always seeking celestial meanings in the starry vault?

"Thou wert ever a mooning, meditative child, Mona, and when thou wast born in the moon's own sign, *Cancer*, thy father said thou shouldst be called Mona, because thou wert of the old *Titan* stock. Forsooth he was right when he said thou hadst brought with thee a knowledge of the mysteries; for thy head is ever running on them."

"I remember daddy used to call me his little *Titan* because I could see the mountains in the moon."

"Yes, as a little child thou didst have the *Titan*-sight, seeing what other people could not. Thou didst also have the low, modulated tones of that race, speaking always from thy chest as if thou wouldst keep thy voice shut away there lest thou shouldst utter things not fitted for common ears to hear.

"So when thou didst grow to womanhood, and

declared thyself a devotee of *Mylitta*, we could not say thee nay. We knew thou wert born one of the *Bees*. The Beehive sign was thy blazonry; for when thou wert little more than a child in arms thou couldst with thy naked eye count the stars in the *Beehive* nebula."

"I cannot do that now," said Mona sadly; "but tell me of our great forebears, the *Titans*, mammy. Thou wert always loath to speak of these matters before," she added.

"No, I have never told thee of these things before, for I would not have thee made vain or consequential; but now that understanding has come to thee, I may speak.

"Thou dost already know that the *Titans*, or *Tityans*, were our immediate ancestors. They were the people of the great Efflatus. It was they who brought down the starry wisdom from the Heart-Age, and through them we have our Druids to-day, an unbroken line of priesthood from the *Cancer* or Breast-Age.

"The *Titans* were the Breast-people. Theirs was the functional expression of inspiration and respiration. Their altars, even, were in the breast-form, two mounds of earth within an enclosure, significant of the fact that Nature is the great mother who nourishes the whole human family at her breast."

"But, Mammy, the *Titans* are said to have been the first warriors. We should have supposed the

breast-people to be more pacific. Our traditions, however, accord them the mightiest conflicts."

"Yes, the *Titans* were the first great warriors of our cycle. They were the first to throw up breast-works in their conflict with the enemy. In other words, the race here came into the external breath, and this brought man into warfare with the powers of darkness; for now his higher influx ceased, and his brain began its action." As Briga spoke she raised her chest for a full inspiration, her figure meanwhile taking on the mien of a goddess. This woman, a true daughter of the *Titans*, understood what the higher, or inspirational influx had been to her race.

Mona was familiar with her mother's figurative speech, and she understood the mood which had come upon her. She knew her mother was living in that past whose traditions were so dear to her race, and Mona would not break the silence between them.

Presently Briga resumed. "It was with the *Titans* as it is with the babe; the battle with evil begins at the breast where the first and the last struggle is met.

"As thou knowest," Briga continued, "in the Titan-age the breast-sign *Cancer* was on the ecliptic. This period was the Turning," or solstice of the race, where the S-O-N like the S-U-N made a stand before starting on the retrograde movement. This is typified by *Cancer's* symbol, the backward mov-

ing crab which nevertheless makes progress. It was in the period of *Cancer* that man's lunacy began —that turned about condition in which he believed himself dependent upon his own natural, or mental light. Thereby he lost in great measure the illumination of the spirit which was originally his."

"But, mammy, our Druids have always had the true illumination. Why did they allow the people to come into such an error?"

"Alas! my child, the ancient teachings are no longer open to the people. Their internal sense is largely lost, the people cannot understand them. The symbol reveals itself only to those who have the interior vision of truth. Hence reasonings on dogma and doctrine are in every one's mouth.

"The priests have, however, faithfully held the people to the *letter* of the ancient wisdom, trusting that in time its inner meaning, or spirit, would again be manifest. In fact it can never be lost, for all the phenomena of the natural world is but an explication of it.

"The *Titan*-age had the functional expression of the *Breast*. They were the people of the Breath, and, with external respiration brain action commenced. Man here began to think from himself, and all his mental images took on the character of the natural world about him."

"Then it cannot have been wrong for him to do so," said Mona thoughtfully. "It must have been in God's purpose since it is in accordance with His

laws. But are we not taught," she quickly added, "that this apparent declension is but seeming? Like the sun's decline from the starry *Crab* in order that it may round its circle of the heavens, may not Man's apparent declension be but seeming also?"

"I trust you are right, my child, the science of correspondences would seem to teach this."

While Mona was speaking, her father had entered, and recognizing that she was dealing with the mysteries the old chieftain bowed his head reverently. When she had ceased he said with the courtesy of the old Kelt to the sex. "It well becometh the lips of woman to dwell upon these matters since upon her is conferred the honor of bringing forth Immanuel; for while the fatherhood may be questioned, the motherhood is an undisputed fact."

Chieftain Arthog of the North Cumberland clans was of a stature and build rarely met to-day unless in the Highlands of Scotland, where a remnant of the pure Keltic race still lingers.

A glance would have sufficed to show that his daughter closely resembled him. There were the same ample proportions, the large blue eye, and the wealth of wavy flaxen hair which both wore hanging on their shoulders.

"Where is Rold?" the old chief presently asked, finding that his son did not make one of the family group.

"He was to meet his brother-Bards this afternoon, and offer for approval some of his own runes," was Briga's reply. "But I cannot understand what is keeping Mira so late," she added, with visible anxiety. "The child left the house before sundown, and I have seen nothing of her since."

"Well, never mind about the daft lass, wife. She was on the Fells an hour since, for I saw her there myself. She's a canty one," the old Chief added musingly; "as erratic in her movements as her own star *Mira*. You see her, and then she is gone. To-night she dropped out of the landscape so suddenly that one might have thought the earth had opened under her feet."

Seeing that his wife continued to regard the door somewhat anxiously he said: "Don't mind about the lass. She's sure to appear when the moon sets. Mira, the variable, the erratic, she is well named." With this he seemed to have quickly dismissed the matter of the whereabout of his youngest child.

Rold, the only son of the old Chief presently entered, bringing as it were a gleam of sunshine to the somber room, and to the grave group seated about the hearth.

To Rold it seemed good to live. So joyous was his nature that his oversoul flowed out to all about him. The seriousness of his race rarely showed itself in him. His jubilant faith in the ultimate righting of things was a constant wellspring of life.

Mira had not appeared when the family gathered about the board where the head of the house asked a simple grace over the meal. When this was finished the old Chief lifted to his lips the tankard of cider placed before him.

This act, however, was merely ceremonial, as he did not drink from the cup but rose and poured its contents upon the hearthstone. These libations to Nature's bounty were frequent and free-will offerings by the *Keltae*. In our day we tender our offerings more grudgingly to the god which we have set up in the market-place. Ours are made to the "Golden-Calf," whose constant and exacting demands upon us constitute life the slavery that it is to-day.

On rising from the evening meal Rold reached for an old harp which hung against the wall. After a few moments spent in putting the strings in order, he accompanied himself upon it, singing one of his own runes.

The Harp of old Cambria sends forth its sweet strains,
For in Cambrian hearts it is Arthur who reigns;
That he is our victor all Nature proclaims.

The "Passing of Arthur" fills history's page,
For there's naught to record but His Story and age;
As in every great cycle His acts have the stage.

The age we term "Golden" claimed Him as its own,
That Prince who the sword of *Excalibar* won;
In whom all the grace of perfection is shown.

Our Warrior, our victor, our Prince and our sage,
His wisdom and prowess all hearts do engage ;
To bring in His kingdom our warfare we wage.

The *Telyn* * of Arthur hangs high in the sky,
His star † never sets for our Prince cannot die,
He's Hero forever, and ever, and aye.

Having finished his rune Rold secured the harp about his neck, and, donning his turban, quitted the house ; but not without a pleasant word of parting to those he left. Briga's son never went from her without the filial pat, or caress, which was a recognition of her motherhood.

Though a chieftain's son Rold had never borne arms. He was the poet, the scholar and sweet singer of their bardic lore. If the old Chief had any regret in the fact that his only son would not replace himself with the clans, he had never uttered it.

He had taken care that Rold was fully equipped for the life of the Bard as Nature had intended him. He whom she had made a sweet singer as well as a poet was not supposed to carry arms, though he might accompany the Chief and his clan to the field of battle.

When the Bard struck his harp, accompanying its sounds with his voice, every bosom glowed with admiration of the heroes whom he celebrated, and the sentiments he aimed to inspire.

* *Telyn* the Keltic name for the starry "Harp or Lyre."

† *Vega*, the great star of the *Lyre*, and final pole star of the great cycle.

The old chieftain's son was a picturesque figure upon which the eye would willingly linger. Dressed in the dark blue tunic of his order he looked the ideal Bard, a character of no small prestige at that period.

"Rold of the Golden Fleece" he was called, a name which seemed peculiarly appropriate because of the golden locks which hung in profusion to his waist. But not for this reason alone was he so named, as his starry blazonry was *Aries*, the mythical ram of the "Fleece."

When a boy of seven years Rold had been entered a student at the old institutinn on the Island of Mona (now Anglesey) so far-famed for Druidical learning. Here he had spent fourteen years under the strict discipline of the Druid priests, while he was carefully instructed in the institutes and mysteries of the primitive bards.

Rold was much in demand among the clans, where his appearance was always hailed with demonstrations of welcome, for the heroic deeds of an ancient ancestry flowed readily from his lips in song; these cyclic epics were the delight of the people even long after their meaning had become obscure. The weird phraseology in which these were couched was dear to the Keltic heart, and failed not to call forth the warmest applause.

A welcome always awaited Rold in all the assembling of the clans, for entertainment and instruction were the province of the bard.

When his son had quitted the house, the old chieftain went to his strong-box, and taking from it a quantity of small twigs he called Mona to help him place them. He wished to communicate with a distant tribe, and to send his message in a manner that if intercepted it could not be interpreted.

In order to do this, Chieftain Arthog made use of the *coelbrun*, or ancient tree-alphabet. This consisted of twigs of the various trees of the wood, each corresponding with a starry hieroglyphic, and again with a principle expressed in the human organism.

For instance, if he wished to convey the idea of intelligence, knowledge, the twig of the elm was used. If of placability, union, amity, the beech twig was employed. If of dependence, lack of support, the twig or tendril of the vine came in play.

If any of the emotions of the heart were to be expressed a twig of the branching oak represented the same. And the particular emotion was shown by the manner of placing this twig. The twig of the oak, or Overshadowing Tree of antiquity, also corresponded to the King, royalty when the twig was placed in the position of a rampant lion.

This was the *Ogham*, or mystery alphabet of the *Keltae*, and their Druids; and to this day if we would penetrate what seems obscure or hidden we speak of "twigging" the secret, a term which has come down from remote times.

Under Mona's skilful fingers and her father's dictation these twigs quickly spelled the mystic

message which only a Druid could interpret. The twigs used in this communication were held in place by a rude kind of matrix, being inserted in grooves which were cut in a flat wooden tablet. The *Keltae* have sent down to our time the key to this Druid-lore in the figure of the *Zodiacal-Man*, a symbol of great antiquity.

While her father had gone to seek a trusty bearer of his message Mona went to look for her sister, feeling that she knew just where Mira would be found. Nor was she mistaken, for on reaching that part of the Fells which overlooked the lands of "Bran the Raven" she came upon the missing girl lying prone upon the ground, her head pillowed in a bank of wild thyme.

CHAPTER IV.

"MIRA, darling, what art thou doing here? Dost thou not know we have had our evening meal long since?"

As there was no reply Mona stooped and raised the face hidden from her sight. "Why art thou grieving, little one?" she asked, as Mira's tear-stained face came into view.

"Oh, Mona, thou knowest that I love him, and he cares not for me. I saw him to-night watching for thee, and he had no more thought for me than for the stones under his feet. He will never love me, for I am not big and grand-looking as thou art." This last came with a wail.

"No, my little sister, thou art one of the 'Wee-ones'; but thou must be brave and trustful. God has ordered thy life, and now if thou triest to order it thyself thou art sure to go astray. Since Carac has not asked thee for thy love, thou shouldst be more maidenly than to give him that love unsought."

"But how can I help loving Carac who is so noble, and good, and tender, too? Dost thou know he carried me home in his arms that night when he found me here alone on the Fells? He was so kind

and pitiful; for he thought I had gone to sleep, and been frightened on awakening, because I cried out when I saw him coming.

"I allowed him to think I had been asleep, for I did not want he should know I had been watching the road to see him. I am sure, Mona, there is no one so worthy of love as he.

"Do not the people call him 'Carac of the Grail'? and 'The Knight of the Cup'?"

"Yes, but he does not like that any one should give him these titles. He says it should first be proven that he is worthy to bear them."

"The people think he is worthy now. Besides, is not the 'Cup' his rightful blazonry?"

"Yes, for the sun was in the sign of the *Lion* at his birth, and in the second *decan* which is the starry *Chalice*. But he is right in saying that no one worthily bears this blazonry but the lion-hearted who lay down their lives for others. They only are the real Knights of the Grail."

"Well, I am sure he is brave and gentle as any knight, and I cannot help loving him," interrupted Mira. "I sometimes think my heart will burst, it is so full of love for him. It is a pain to bear," putting her hand to her breast as she spoke.

Mona was moved to take the slight figure in her arms; and while looking into the soft eyes raised to her own she said tenderly:

"My little sister should remember that the heart is the sanctuary of the life? God's audience chamber.

We should not allow a merely human love to fill its altar. But come with me to the shrine of *De Mater*, and we will ask the great Mother to put away the mask from thine eyes, that thou mayest see how selfish is the passion which we call love."

Half leading and half carrying her sister, Mona proceeded down the Fells, and the two presently found themselves before one of the massive roadside shrines which the people of the Breast-period dedicated to the Great Mother, she who later bore the various names of *Ceres*, *Ceridwen*,* *De Mater* and the many-breasted *Diana*.

This shrine consisted of a stone cross surmounting a box-like enclosure, the cover of which Mona slipped a little aside as its weight was considerable. From its compartment she took a small skin pressed in the form of the human features, but without aperture. This she placed over her sister's face, bidding Mira kneel beside her.

"Oh, Great Mother, at whose ample breast we are all nourished, put away from this dear child's eyes the mask which thou hast imposed. Show her things as they really are, and not as they appear. Give her the reversed vision that she may behold things in their true relations. She is our ewe lamb, and we bring her to thee, lest she fall into the hands of the cruel shearers who would take her fleece untimely. This we ask for Truth's sake."

* *Ceridwen* was the British *Ceres*, the personification of the nourishing and sustaining principle in nature; the goddess of the mysteries.

THE SISTERS AT THE SHRINE

Rising after a moment, Mona lifted the mask from her sister's face, and replaced it in the stone enclosure under the cross. This was significant of the fact that while bearing our cross, the physical body, Nature imposes upon our vision a veil, which failing to realize few of us are able to put away.

"Why dost thou so often call me a ewe lamb, Mona? That means a sacrifice, an offering," said Mira troubled, though she knew not why, at her sister's words.

"I used the term simply as a pet name, dearie; but see to it that thou dost not make its significance true in thy life. Thou art indeed our ewe lamb; the youngest and the pet of the flock."

"I wish the *Ram** was not my blazonry. I do not want to be called a ewe lamb. Sheep and rams are stupid things, always tumbling over each other, and never going where you would have them, but straying all about," said Mira perversely.

"And is not my little sister always straying?" Mona drew the slender form more closely to her as she added. "I wish thou wouldst not, Mira, for thou dost give my mother and myself much concern for thee at times.

"This propensity to stray in sheep and lambs makes the flocks peculiarly expressive of the action ever going on in the human brain, or the *Aries*-function. The ram as leader of the flock preserves

* *Aries* the starry Ram, the symbol for April.

its order and unity. See that thou dost the same with thy thoughts; and thy life will then be an orderly one."

"What dost thou mean, Mona, by the reversed vision, and why didst thou ask that I might see things as they really are? There is no trouble with my sight."

"Thou must know, Mira, that most of us to-day have the abnormally reversed vision, seeing everything through a sensuous medium. What we need is the reversal of this, and that can come only through the opening of the inner sight.

"The expression of thy nature is through the functional-principle of the cerebrum; here is turned about or reversed whatever is thrown upon the retina. In the cerebrum is registered every sensation of the body, and until the inner, or true vision, is gained the reports at the cerebrum are always introverted, turned about. This we are taught by the convoluted horns of the ram. These are symbolic of the convolutions of the brain, as well as of the reversal which takes place at the retina; for the brain is the *cornu*-function."

"Oh, Mona, thou art so wise. How dost thou learn and remember these things? While I am as stupid as the old ram who does not know what his head was made for, but tries to walk with it," Mira cried petulantly. Then her sister's words recurring to her she asked—"Who are the shearers who would take my fleece?"

"The shearers are those selfish loves and affections which hinder our spiritual growth, and hence take our fleece untimely, ere its golden glory is attained. "This applies peculiarly to thee, little sister, since thou wert born in the month *Giblein* (the Keltic word for April) and the term signifies shag or fleece, because Nature in this month starts out to win her fleece of verdure. April is the ram-period, and every tiny blade of grass is pushing its head into visibility; for here is expressed the expenditure of force."

"I know the stupid old ram is always butting his head against something," replied Mira, her sensitive mouth quivering as she spoke.

"Yes, sister mine, and so the ram is thy fitting symbol, for thou, too, art ever pushing some scheme or plan; and thy small body will do well if it keeps up with all thy brain engenders."

"Why should I not think about the things that I would like to do?" said Mira. "I must think about something."

"Yes, thou must needs push with the *anterior* and *posterior* horns of thy brain; but look to it that the moving spring of thy purposes be not self; and live not in the sensations of thy body. Thy nature is dominated by the law of sensation, and hence thou art liable to give undue importance to its reports. Then again, as with the ram, thou art lavish in thine expenditure of force. Thou art ever butting thy bright head, thy lively wit, against some obstacle that opposes thee."

"Why is not Rold the same? His symbol is the 'Ram,' for mammy told me so."

"Yes, but Rold's is a different expression of this sign. His *decan* also is different, for his is '*Perseus* the Rescuer'; while thine is '*Cetus* the sea-monster.'"

"What does that mean?" Mira asked quickly; whereupon Mona related to her the old myth associated with the constellation termed "*Cetus* the Whale." Herein is veiled much arcane teaching of the sign *Aries*, and the function of which it is the symbol, as the ancient world knew when sending down the mysteries in the starry hieroglyphics.

Mona left her sister soundly sleeping when she again entered the living room to attend to some domestic duty for the morrow.

"Why dost thou so often of late take upon thyself Mira's tasks?" her mother asked, seeing Mona thus employed. "I fear thou art encouraging her to shirk her duties."

"Mira is little more than a child yet, mother, a woman's cares will soon enough overtake her." After this both lapsed into silence. Mona was trying to find words in which to tell her mother what was on her mind about Mira.

Briga was the first to break the silence. "How art thou coming on with thy work in the temple? when will thy next initiation take place?"

"This day twelvemonth I shall take my last degree." Then suddenly changing the subject Mona

said—"Dost know, mother, that our little Mira believes herself deeply in love with 'Carac of the Grail'?"

"She could scarcely find a better man," her mother replied, scanning Mona's face as she spoke. "Carac comes of the old royal blood, and a kindlier nature one would go far to find."

"But he does not think of Mira in this way, mammy. The poor child knows he is indifferent to her, and she is breaking her heart about it. That was the trouble with her to-night. She would not come in and show her tear-stained face, lest Rold should question her about it."

"I would sooner a daughter of mine should throw herself into the ravine than to fling her heart at any man's feet."

"Would it not be well to set her a task in spinning at the gloaming time? For she is wont at this hour to stray away on the Fells. Thou knowest, mammy, that Mira is our lamb, and needs the leading-string at present. If she is allowed to go her own way we may have a blemished offering laid as a sacrifice upon our home altar."

Mona had said what she felt it her duty to say, knowing what she did of her sister's movements, but she now changed the subject.

"Art thou willing, mother, that I ask my sometime playmate, Boadicea, to come here for a short stay with me?"

"Thou art welcome to ask her if that is thy pleas-

ure," the elder woman replied after a moment's hesitation. She had evidently been surprised at her daughter's request. But she quickly added, "I have wondered much at the continuance of thy friendship for the Prince Cadallan's daughter. It was another thing when thou wert children."

"Why mother, what hast thou against Buddig? * Thou wert formerly fond of her."

"She seemeth to me unmaidenly, riding at the head of the clans as we hear of her doing. How else hath she won the cognomen of 'Boadicea of the Sword'?"

"Mother, thou dost mistake. Boadicea could never have won that name as a reproach. It was given her because she so freely speaks the truth to friend or foe. Naturally she has made enemies, for Truth, like a sword, pierces, divides and separates. I think Boadicea would go to the stake for the principles she has espoused."

As Briga did not respond to this, her daughter continued: "Boadicea has never gotten over her mother's death. The noble *Europeia* was everything to her children. I thought that a visit here at this time might take her mind from her trouble, as I could interest her in some of the children who have lately come into my classes."

Still Briga was silent, and Mona intent to win her mother's ear went on to defend her friend. "I am sure, mammy, Boadicea's care and tenderness to the

* *Buddig* was Boadicea's British name.

babe which her mother left proves her not to be lacking in the gentler graces of woman."

"Such an Amazon* in carriage would hardly be expected to suckle an infant child. I wonder not that it died," replied Briga, disposed to see only the less feminine traits in her daughter's friend.

"Boadicea is the child of a great chieftain, mother. It would not be strange if she did somewhat resemble her warrior-sire."

"Art thou not also the child of a great chieftain?" her mother asked, adding: "Still, thou dost not belie thy sex. I like not to see a woman so aggressive in demeanor."

"Mother, when we remember what the great Cadallan's † sword has done for the *Brigantes*, making them preëminent over every other British tribe, we should look leniently upon the same characteristics as they are displayed by his daughter.

"We have fallen upon evil times, and the peace-loving policy of our honored ancestors, who, under 'Hugh the Mighty,' took Britain without arms, will not do for us to-day.

"The ancient *Keltae* as non-combatants retired before the aggressions of invaders; but unless we, their descendants, would be exterminated by the Roman legions, who not only take our lands from us, but who also pollute the morals of our people,

* The Amazon women had the right breast removed the better to wield the sword.

† Prince of the Brigantes.

we must be ready to wield the sword both spiritually and physically; woman as well as man."

Realizing that her mother's prejudice against her friend might operate to make a visit from the latter less pleasant than she had hoped, Mona gave up her purpose. She would not ask her mother to meet daily one to whom she seemed so opposed.

CHAPTER V.

The grotto adjoining the temple grounds was where Mona taught her class during those months when the weather permitted; and that was the greater portion of the year, for here the vines and shrubs and mossgrown recesses of rock were always green. The natural beauty of this spot was greatly enhanced by art; and these rustic bowers afforded a complete shelter from both sun and rain.

Here on a certain autumn morning Mona's pupils were all assembled. For three years she had been assiduously storing the honey of her order, that celestial wisdom which had been the inheritance of the Kelts from the Breast-age. Though this was a legacy from the Heart-age, it had first been formulated as a science in that period when the sign *Cancer* was on the ecliptic. In this sign is the nebula of the starry *Beehive*; naturally honey has always been the synonym of celestial truth. The Keltae were the first to store this celestial honey as they were the earliest swarm from the human hive.

During the three years of Mona's temple service the Sun had failed not to pause in each of his thirty-

six mansions long enough to blazon the symbol on Nature's face, as ever since the Creation.

On this October morning the great luminary was in the constellation of the "Northern Crown," the third and last *decan* of the sign "*Libra* the Scales." In this sign is known that equilibration of atmosphere which is proverbial while the sun is in the starry "Balance." It is significant that the "*Crown*" is the last *decan* of this sign.

For here Nature wears her crown right royally, when in all her glory of color she has focused her forces for her final and most spiritual expression. "Month of the Holy Angels" it is well called.

In a few days the sun would enter the sign *Scorpio*, ushering in the so-termed *Fall*. In other words, the sun would have dropped from the Balance or Reins to the Scorpion symbol. It was in *Scorpio* that *Phaeton* dropped the reins when attempting to drive the chariot of the sun; for the old myth teaches the fall of man through the principle signified in *Scorpio*. Hence the season when the sun is here is still called the Fall.

Mona's pupils had reached the grotto before their teacher, and two or three of their number were holding a discussion over the *Glain* or "Druid-Egg."

Among these were the young Prince *Arviragus*, the youngest son of "Kimbelin the Keen" (the Druid King of Britain), and Leda Ravenson, the little daughter of "Bran the Raven."

The Prince *Arviragus* is oftenest mentioned in history by his Romanized name, *Prastagus*, for he became the most famous of Kimbelin's sons. At this time he was in his early youth, lithe of limb, well-favored, and with the manners and bearing of a courtier. This son of "Kimbelin the Keen" and his Roman Queen *Cartismandua*, mingled with his British blood from "Beli the Great" also that of imperial Rome.

The maiden of whom we have spoken, Leda Ravenson, or "Leda the Swan" as she was generally called, was at this time in her fifteenth year, and possessing great vivacity combined with charming winsome manners.

Between these young people a boy and girl friendship had become quickly established on their entering the temple as students.

"*Arviragus* the Kneeler" was the title given to this son of the King, because his starry blazonry was "Hercules." The boy had also a fancy for attaching to his girdle a baby-lion skin, the badge of the Hero.* This Prince had the graceful habit of dropping upon one knee when soliciting a favor.

This October morning the young Prince had brought into the class the sacred "Glain" which the ancient Keltæ held in high esteem as Nature's expression of a great mystery.

To the Druids this Egg, produced by the serpent at midsummer when the sun is just entering the con-

* Hercules.

stellation of the *Hydra*, typified the "Renovation or Renewal of mankind." This was the fundamental doctrine of the Arkite teachings.

The Prince *Arviragus* had been so fortunate as to come upon one of these serpent-eggs the previous Midsummer Eve, discovering it before it had become quite hardened. His finding it at all was held to be the highest evidence of his worthiness to a share in the mysteries.

The sacred *Glain* was believed by the common people to insure to its possessor success in all his undertakings. Thus did the ignorant turn about its ancient significance as a symbol, thereby making one of the holiest mysteries the foundation of their superstition. To the Initiate, however, this egg produced from the head of the serpent at this time was Nature's type of the divinely quickened life germ. In other words, it was significant of the procreative life force, the higher use of which opens man's vision to the mysteries.

Leda and the Prince after having exhibited the *Glain* to their companions were talking about it themselves. "Thou sayest it is a ring, or coil cast off by the serpent; and that the creature has a great struggle to throw it off?" was Leda's query as she examined with curiosity the pale blue, oblong ring in her hand. Here might be traced an outline resembling the undulatory movement of the reptile.

"It looks and feels like glass?" she added, "what do you suppose is the reason?"

THE PRINCE ARVIRAGUS, AND LEDA, THE SWAN-MAIDEN

"There are several theories about its substance," the Prince replied. "Many believe that it is composed of slime converted into glass by heat and fusion.

"But the method of its formation is said to be in this way—When the sun enters the constellation of the *Hydra* serpents meet in numbers, and by putting their heads together and hissing a bubble is produced which forms about the head of one or more of them when thus associated.

"This bubble presently takes the form of a ring or coil, and in order to throw it off, the body of the reptile must be passed through it. In this ordeal they help each other by hissing. This tends to keep the ring soft until they can move it along the body. After the ring is cast off it is said to harden very soon as you see it now."

"I wonder why they do this if they have to work so hard," said Leda. "We must ask Mistress Mona, she can tell us."

At this moment Mona appeared. "We are all here in good time," was her greeting as her eye took in the little group assembled. She had a pleasant word for each personally, and then, after a simple formula of prayer in which her pupils joined, the lesson began.

"Which character of the starry alphabet do we take to-day?" she asked, and the response was immediate: "The *Scorpion* is our lesson this morning."

At this the Prince stepped forward, and dropping

on one knee presented the Druid-egg to Mona, and begged to ask some questions about it before commencing the lesson.

"Certainly you may. I intended talking to you this morning about the *Glain*, for it is a symbol of the sign which is our lesson to day," Mona said, regarding the youth with pleased surprise.

With a courteous acknowledgment of the granted favor, the Prince asked why the egg was supposed to be produced on Midsummer Eve rather than at any other time in the year. For it was a well-known fact that it was produced only at this season.

Mona replied, "Because the *Glain* is Nature's expression of a truth which the stars confirm. The serpent throws off this coil only when the sun is in the constellation of the *Hydra's Head;* for then its intensest beams fall upon the earth. The mystery taught by the *Glain*, however, only an Initiate in the sacred rites can fully understand.

"I will give you some of its correspondences now and when your mind is ready for the higher truth these will show you the interior or real meaning.

"The serpent is found in those countries only where the sun's rays fall upon the earth most directly; for heat and moisture are necessary conditions to nourish this reptile into life and activity, while the opposite extreme of temperature produces torpor and ultimately death. Can any of you tell me the natural position of the serpent in its torpid state?"

"When it is torpid or inactive, the serpent's body

takes on the form of a complete coil, like this ring," the Prince replied.

"In the undulatory line which the transparency reveals, we are shown the reptile in *action;* and the *torpid* condition, in the form of the *Glain* itself which is a coil," he added.

"You are correct; but what does the coil in this connection teach us?" As there was no response from the class Mona answered: "It shows the thraldom into which man is liable to come through his serpent, or sensual nature; for this is his informing principle. Because of spiritual torpor man comes into the coil of sense; and until he throws this off the sacred mysteries are always hidden from him.

"But to return to the *Glain* which our most sacred traditions affirm to be produced on Midsummer Eve. The throwing off of the serpent's egg is coincident with the sun's completed circuit of the heavens. That this is always in the heart-sign has arcane teaching understood only by the Initiate in the mysteries.

"Now we will take up the teaching of the symbol *Scorpio* as this is the next sign into which the sun enters. But first, will some one tell me why the thirty-six starry hieroglyphics which belong to the twelve signs are called *decans?*"

To this the Prince responded: "The term *decan* means the same as the number Ten, because each *decan* of a sign covers or expresses ten days of the sun's stay in the sign to which that *decan* belongs."

"You mean that each *decan* covers about ten degrees of a sign, and the sun remains about a day in each of the thirty degrees. Hence each sign has three starry hieroglyphics which are intended to express and explain the arcane meaning of the zodiacal emblems.

"Before we go farther," Mona continued, "I must tell you that the ancient world employed two symbols for the sign *Scorpio*, that of the 'White Eagle' as well as that of the *Scorpion*.

"Can any one tell me some of the habits and characteristics of the Eagle?" To this there was a general response which Mona summed up as follows—

"The Eagle builds its nest and brings forth its young only on the lofty crag or mountain top. Its remarkable vision, and its flights in the very eye of the sun, so to speak, are correctly given. But there is another fact which we should not overlook. The eagle is accredited with the power to renew its life. The scorpion also casts its skin and thereby is rejuvenated. Thus we see that both of the symbols given by the old world to this sign signify renovation, or renewal of life.

"Leda Ravenson will now tell us what she has learned regarding the scorpion's nature and habits."

The maiden thus called upon at once responded. "The scorpion is a reptile without limbs, a creature that crawls upon the earth, and is among the most venomous of the reptile species. Its sting, situated

in the tail, produces on the victim a torpor similar to death. And unless overcome, this condition ends in complete lethargy."

"Yes, the scorpion is found where heat and moisture prevail, and generates its species under these conditions. The eyrie-breeding eagle, or bird of the heavens; and the venomous earth-breeding scorpion, as the mysteries teach, express the two poles of creation, the higher and the lower generation.

"What do we find to be Nature's expression when the sun is in the sign *Scorpio* and its *decans?*" Mona saw that her class was not prepared for this question. They had not thought of the corresponding relation between season and sign.

"When the sun is in *Scorpio* * is not Nature expressing her Fall? Is she not settling into that torpor here signified? Now is the paralysis of all her forces, for the thrall of the serpent is upon her. Nor will she arise to life and activity until the sun attains the sign of the head—*Aries*—or April.

"To what function of the body does the symbol *Scorpio* belong?" was Mona's next question, directing the attention of her class to the figure of the zodiacal-man which she had placed before them.

"To the reproductive function, anciently termed 'the secrets.'"

"Why has this function been called the secrets? I will tell you, because the teaching of this starry emblem is the foundation of the mysteries.

* The November Sign.

"Through the disorderly expression of the function here signified the race has come into a spiritually torpid or lethargic state. In other words, Man is in the coils of the serpent.

"What are the three starry hieroglyphics which belong to the sign *Scorpio*, and help to unfold its veiled meaning?"

These were quickly given in their order—the constellation first signified is the "Serpent"—the second is "*Ophiuchus* the Serpent-Holder," and lastly "Hercules the Hero."

"Arviragus, you may tell us the meaning of these symbols," Mona said, addressing the Prince.

The youth stepped forward and with the assurance of one who feels that he knows what he is talking about, began the explanation desired of him.

"The first *decan* of *Scorpio*, which is the starry 'Serpent,' we are taught signifies the sensual principle, which is necessary to man's physical life, and also to his mental and spiritual life. The second *decan* of *Scorpio* is the 'Serpent-Holder.' Here is signified the orderly expression of this attribute which is the agent of life and intelligence."

"Yes," responded Mona. "The pictured constellations show us Man in the coils of the Serpent. Either he is to dominate this principle of his nature, or it gains dominion over him. So subtle is the sensual attribute that the ancient world fittingly symbolized it by the serpent, whose deadly charm

can so enthrall man that all his powers yield to the fatal spell.

" Through this same attribute in orderly action is derived the use of the mental and spiritual faculties; while its misuse and abuse causes to settle upon them the torpor of death, that spiritual lethargy which closes the inner vision.

" Can you name any of the stars in the constellation of the ' Serpent-Holder ' ? "

" Yes, the principal star is called ' *Iklil-al-Jebbah* ' which signifies the crown of the brow."

" That is correct," Mona rejoined ; " and we thus see that the ancient people in thus naming this star affirm the principle here signified to be the *crowning* principle. Hence the emblem of the serpent was anciently worn upon the forehead or brow in token of the elevation, exaltation of this principle. Man is the recipient of the higher knowledge in just that degree in which he becomes the ' Serpent-Holder.' It is always the elevation of the serpent that works man's redemption.

" Now you may give the significance of the third *decan* of *Scorpio*," Mona added.

" The third *decan* is ' Hercules the Kneeler,' because the *Hero* is thus represented in the constellations."

" Yes, the attitude of reverence is the natural attitude of him who has passed his rubicon as the ' Serpent-Holder.' This implies the consecration of

all the faculties, physical, mental and spiritual, for this alone makes man the Conqueror.

" So we find that the lesson taught by the symbol *Scorpio* is that the serpent or sensual attribute was designed to ever renew the physical life of the race, and to crown man with wisdom and honor."

Then, turning to the young Prince, Mona asked if the sign *Scorpio* should be regarded as evil or baleful ?

" Not at all," was the youth's reply. " In fact it is one of the four royal signs, and was anciently held in great honor. Besides it is my own blazonry," the Prince added ; " and I am ready to break a lance with any one who intimates that it is inherently or inevitably evil."

" You are right," Mona replied, " and we will do well to remember that Scorpio marks that period anciently termed *Samhuinn* * (the month of all souls) because through the principle here expressed all souls come into a body. Hence the ancient festival of ' All Souls ' was held when the sun entered the sign *Scorpio*.

" Can the class tell me of another fact regarding the sign *Scorpio* which is of interest in this connection, and which has not yet been mentioned ? "

This question Leda Ravenson desired to answer and was allowed to do so. " Did you not tell us that it is when the sun is in the sign *Scorpio* that the *Leonids*, or meteors fall ? " she asked.

* The Keltic word for November.

"Yes, this was the fact that I wished you to recall. The month, *Samhuinn* (of all souls), November, shares with the sacred month of August the meteoric showers whose radiating point is always the starry *Lion*.

"This teaching has been given you to-day," Mona continued, "as a preparation for one of our most ancient festivals which is now very near. Will some one tell me what we are about to celebrate?"

"Forefathers' Night, on the first of November," was the reply. "Yes, we renew our hearthfires at this period from the sacred fire. This is in commemoration of the fact that our Forefathers drew down from heaven the divine flame which lighted the torch of life. Hence we relight our altar fires afresh from the meteoric shower which this season affords. To-day it is simply a figurative, or symbolic, ceremony; serving to keep before the minds of the people a truth of which it is but the shadow and symbol.

"Before our lesson is finished," Mona added, "we will have a word to say about the sacred language of correspondences with which we have been dealing. Why should this language be cultivated by man?"

"Because it is the language of the angels, as well as the most exalted of sciences. In its study and use we are brought into spiritual commerce with the angelic world as our Druids have always taught."

The festival of "Forefathers' Fire" was celebrated by the ancient Kelts on the night of the first of November, or when the sun entered the symbol

of the *Scorpion.* This was one of the most sacred Druidical rites.

A lofty peak or elevated cliff was chosen as the spot where the sacred fire was to be lighted, here the people assembled on " Forefathers' Night," and at a given signal every fire in the region was extinguished.

While silence and darkness reigned about them the people kept their vigil, with eyes upraised to the heavens where the meteoric illumination held them, as it were, spellbound. Meanwhile the Druid priest was bringing to bear upon this fiery display over their heads the focusing power of a burning glass.

When the heat thus engendered had ignited the inflammable material upon which it had been brought to bear, a great shout went up from the kneeling multitude. They had the fire from heaven, a proof to them that they had not lost the divine favor. Their vigil did not end, however, until the dawn of the new day dispersed them to their homes.

This Druidical observance was a testimony to the purer flame which had animated their Forefathers. The vigil being ended, every one strove to carry away a brand or coal from the fire thus lighted. This had constantly to be blown upon with the breath, lest it should be extinguished ere home was reached ; for no hearth was held sacred which was not relighted at this time from the " Forefather's Fire."

Chieftain Arthog had himself reverently carried home the brand that was to relight the fire upon his hearthstone, and which would not be suffered to go out again for the year. But when he would gather his family about him, as was the custom after these vigils, to take sup together, Mira was missing from the circle and could not be found.

Mona had gathered with the family on this occasion, but though present with them in the body her thoughts had wandered to the mystical rite in which she had just participated.

On this night so pregnant with mystery she had as usual assisted at the tearing down of their temple roof, and in its reconstruction. The significance of this roof was peculiarly arcane, because implying the veil of the *Inmost*, that covering intended to shield from profanation. And its reconstruction in a night, while the meteoric shower was falling, was significant of that "Renovation" toward which the Druids were always looking.

Happily on the night in question no life had been the forfeit of carelessness or accident on the part of those engaged, as was sometimes the case.

This rebuilding of the temple roof was considered to be the test of worthiness to a participation in the mysteries. For those who dropped their bundle of reeds while engaged in this reconstruction, are said to have been instantly seized by their companions and *torn to pieces.*

This failure to sustain their burden implied their

unfitness for the work, as every natural fact had to them a spiritual meaning. "Tearing to pieces" does not imply natural but spiritual death, we are told by the great Seer. Plainly the Druidical system was one of significatives.

On Mira's coming in later, looking wan and dispirited, Mona urged upon her some of the hot milk posset of which the family had partaken. "It has the heat of the new fire in it," Mira cried, putting it from her with a sort of horror. She wanted nothing but to sleep, she said; and without approaching the fireside she had crept away to bed.

When questioned afterward by her sister as to her conduct on this occasion, for she confessed to not having been present on the cliff that night, Mira had petulantly replied, that she was not a devotee, but one of the people—that she had no lot or part in the observances in which her sister delighted. One fire was just the same to her as another fire, she could see no difference between them.

"But one fire is not the same as another fire, as thou knowest full well, Mira. Our altar flame can burn upward to God, or downward to self as we will. This we are taught in the constellation *Ara* * whose starry incense-fires were formerly ascending, before obliquity came in; for our planetary system doth ever keep pace with man.

"Happily for thee, my sister, that thy life-torch

* The constellation *Ara* the Altar.

was lighted at a consecrated altar, else it would have lacked entirely the aspiring quality. Now, smother or divert the flame as thou wilt, its tendency is to strive upward."

"Oh, Mona, thou dost speak a language with which I am not acquaint. I cannot understand thee."

"Thy heart kens full well my meaning, but thou art the perverse ram, determined to go thine own way. Thou wilt, however, presently bring up against the wall which keeps thee ever within the fold."

CHAPTER VI.

"The Ship Argo" held as prominent a place in the ancient Mysteries as does the Ark in the biblical record. It also as plainly taught the preservation of mankind.

In all religious ceremonials and sacred processions this crescent-shaped boat was borne by the high priest. Its name also was given to the Arkite temples of old Britain where these mysteries were taught. The sacred Ship may be seen even to day in every temple of India, for the universality of the starry allegory is well proven

The starry Ship is one of the hieroglyphics of the sign *Cancer*. Here is veiled teaching which is to-day no better understood than is the sacred allegory of the Ark of holy writ; for they have the same significance.

The starry Ship has always been a symbol of the human breast where is carried the precious argosy of life. The breast is that Ark of the covenant, "the holy of holies," where Jehovah tabernacles with man; for is not the heart here? The Keltic word for the same is *Car-dia*, the seat of Deity.

The "Helio-arkite mysteries" (or the sun and

moon-teachings) were the inheritance of the *Titans* from the "Golden-Age" which had preceded theirs. In the "Golden-Age" man was at the heart of things, and had all needful knowledge. Then followed the breast or *Titan* age, that apparently retrograde movement when the spiritual conflicts of the race began; for the functional expression of this period was an external respiration. This brought in the action of mentality, when the higher influx, or the internal breath, ceased.

The period of the Heart-Age is now termed the mythological age of the gods. Here aspiration was the dominant principle; and hence the higher influx, or that of the internal breath, was man's beatific state. These were the *Leo*-people or the Lion-hearted race, who knew nothing of external respiration. Their life was in a sense embryonic. Like the child in pre-natal conditions their influx was direct from the great Parent Source.

The heart action of this race was consequently unlike what is considered normal to-day. Its valvula workings did not immediately supply the lungs with blood. In other words, the people of the Heart-Age were blue-blooded.

It was in commemoration of this godlike race, whose function was the noblest in the body, that the Keltic tribes used a blue stain for their flesh. This was believed to confer courage in war, the lion-heart. Hence blue was the sacred color of the "Keltic Britons as late as Cæsar's time.

Even to-day man always desires to claim this blue strain in his blood as allying him with the oldest and noblest of his kind.

In the genesis and birth of every child are shadowed forth the Arkite mysteries. He floats upon the waters in the crescent-shaped boat, and not until their subsidence is his Ararat attained. He has reached the mount of rest, the maternal breast. His barque has come in through the floods with its precious argosy of life preserved in that Ark, the chest.

Respiration quickly makes the child at one with his new environment. Now is he a veritable *Titan*, and with every breath he throws up breast-works as a defense against the enemy. His is no longer the internal respiration but the external; for he has reached the field of action, and in his bosom pulsates that mysterious function, the heart, whose monitions are the divine consciousness within.

In the mystic rite of the breaking of the bottle and the pouring forth of the wine, with which every ship is launched to-day, is commemorated this Arkite mystery, the putting to sea of each individual barque freighted with human life.

For three years Mona had been looking forward to her initiation into the mysteries of *Ceridwen*.* During this time she had served a novitiate in the order of *Mylitta*, as a honey-storer, or busy bee. But even now, she could not be fully admitted into the sacred mysteries. This would require twenty

* The British Ceres.

years of study and service in the temple with evidence of fitness to receive the same.

The veil was to be partially withdrawn, however, and she was to be granted a glimpse into that inner court, that holy of holies, whither the consecrated foot is alone entitled to enter.

The *Helio-Arkite* temple of *Mylitta* dedicated to the celestial teaching found its votaries chiefly among women; though its symbols, the crescent moon, and the "Beehive," were worn by priests of the highest order.

The building was a dome-shaped structure, set deep into the earth out of which, it rose like a huge beehive. The peculiar masonry of which it was formed is still to be found in some of the British ruins. For instance, "*Dinas Bran*" (the Castle of the Raven) in Wales has portions of its walls still standing after more than two thousand years.

The masonry of "Raven Castle" is an expression of the law of cohesion as understood by its builders. Its walls are said to have withstood the onslaughts of time because the lime used in its construction was slacked in milk. This art came down from the *Titans*, or Breast-people, who naturally laid their foundations in the lacteal fluid.

We will now enter the Presence Chamber of *Ceridwen's* temple. It is a circular amphitheater into which the daylight does not penetrate, being ventilated by cunningly constructed air cells in its double walls.

The first glance around this auditorium conveys the idea of an orrery on a very grand scale, for not only is the planetary system here represented, but also the starry economy. The great wheel of the heavens (the zodiacal circle) with its thirty-six constellations make of the dome a complete picture gallery. The walls also are covered with figures which are cabalistic to any one uninitiated in the heavenly science.

We will mention here but two of these figures. "The Zodiacal Man" with the twelve signs about his person; and the sacred "Ark" floating on a turbulent sea, enfolded in the darkness of night.

On the floor in the center of this hall stands a large "Beehive," or rather a representation of one. The significance of its being here is apparent when we learn that honey denotes celestial truth. In other words, here in this temple is stored the sacred honey, and the devotees, or "Melissae," are the active workers in this hive, gathering and preserving this ambrosial food.

The light of this great interior proceeds from a device which represents the sun in complete eclipse, when his corona is alone visible. This latter, however, emits a singular effulgence which penetrates every part of the temple, bringing out clearly the minutest figure.

An Initiation into the rites of *Mylitta* is about to take place; but this is to be preceded by an examination of candidates.

A high priestess enters followed by twelve maidens all wearing the simple white robe which characterized Druidesses. On the breast of this was embroidered in silver thread the crescent moon, and this was the only pretense of adornment, if we except the chaplet of oak-leaves which all wore upon the head.

The priestess and maidens in turn make a low obeisance before the figure of the eclipsed sun; and then the twelve range themselves about the "Beehive." These twelve young women all belong to the *Cancer* expression, the Breast-people; and are of the best blood in the land. They also present the highest type of physical development.

The priestess, a woman of dignified bearing and serene countenance, presently calls attention to a colossal figure in the human form, which is facing the obscured luminary. She designates this figure by pointing to it with the oaken bough which she holds in her hand.

"Mona, the novice, will explain this mystic-hieroglyphic;" the priestess says, turning to the old Chief's daughter.

Mona comes forward. "This figure represents Universal-Man, who inhabits all worlds and planets, the divinely-begotten Son," is the maiden's reply.

The next question is addressed in the order in which the novices stand.

"Hath any man ever seen Him, the divinely-begotten Son?" the priestess asks.

"Yes, in His manifestation; but no mortal hath beheld His Essence. To any one age is visible but one member of His body."

"Are *we* members of His body?"

"We trust that we are individually and collectively members of His body, since to our age it is given to serve His Feet."

"What evidence have we that our age is the functional expression of the Feet?"

"The heavenly science shows us that the sign *Pisces*, the symbol of the Feet, is now passing the prime meridian. In other words, it is the present ecliptical sign."

"But is not the sign *Virgo*, the Virgin, also passing the same point? Why do we not call it the age of the *Abdominal* expression, since *Virgo* is the symbol of this function?"

"It is both, but the Virgin is passing the meridian in the North where is indicated the spiritual or more obscure manifestation of the age. But *Pisces* is passing in the South where the physical and material finds expression. Both these emblems, however, the *Fishes* and the *Virgin*, are symbolic of bringing-forth, a principle which is expressive of the functions they typify."

"Is this symbolism borne out in the expression of our day?" the priestess asks. "Have we the *Abdominal* manifestation as well as that of the Feet?"

"Yes, for the Virgin hath borne to our age.

Domina, 'Our Lady of the heavens,' hath brought forth."

"Have we physical evidence of this celestial bringing-forth?"

"We have both the physical and the celestial evidence in the 'Maiden's Son.' He for whom the *Magi* long looked because the heavens foretold His advent while the *Virgin* was on the ecliptic."

"When so long looked for why was His advent obscure, unheralded? And why did the *Magi* find Him in the swaddling bands of infancy?"

"Because Truth in its reincarnation, or rehabiliment, is always obscure. Only the *Magi*, those who are wise in the starry-lore, can discern the divine child; for His 'Appearing' must always be made in the swaddling clothes of doctrine and dogma."

"Are we to understand from this 'Appearing' that the old Truth is to find rehabiliment, a fleshly manifestation?"

"Yes, for the spiritual is always shadowed forth in the natural."

"What lesson does our physical luminary teach us regarding this appearing?"

The novice turns toward the symbol of the obscured sun whose corona is giving forth a wondrous effulgence. Then she replies. "The physical sun when in complete eclipse: as here shown, is the prototype of the divinely-begotten Son. Though we do not see His face the effulgence of His presence is the only light of the world."

Saying this the novice bows her head reverently for a moment before the eclipsed luminary, which sheds a radiance seeming ever to increase.

"Does man know that his light proceeds from the divine S-O-N?"

"He may know this from the law of correspondence. The celestial teaching shows him that as the physical sun is his natural light and life-giving principle, by which his body is vivified; so is the divine Son the life and light of his spiritual nature. For the things discerned by the outward vision are the mirror or reflection of the things discerned by the inward vision."

"What do you understand by the fact that only as the physical luminary sets is man able to read the starry message?"

"Because only as man's natural light (his self-derived intelligence) gives place to the light of the spirit, does the higher, or celestial, truth dawn upon him."

"Very true, hence Druidism has always held the night in estimation over the day; for the sun must decline ere the stars can appear. We can indeed see them from some great depth like a well or mine, below the surface of things. Hence the saying 'Truth lies deep at the bottom of a well.'

"You have affirmed our age to be that of the 'Feet,'" the priestess continued. "Have we evidence of this which will tell against this period in history?"

Mona responded. "The manifestation of our age is in correspondence with our functional expression. We are in the 'Feet,' and naturally the enemy is overrunning our land and trampling out our altar fires. Not only is the foe building natural highways in which future generations must travel; but these 'Roman Ways' also find their correspondence in those highways of law and religion into which they would force our people. For the 'Feet' are prone to wander from the old, well-worn track, and to make new paths in which to do so.

"Because of these same 'Roman Ways' the race will go halting up the ages; for the 'Feet' take on accretions foreign to them, and which have later to be thrown off, as time will prove.

"Again, the 'Feet' are the first departure from the perpendicular in man. So are his departures from his original uprightness made through the principle which the 'Feet' express. For they are the lowest function of the body, but that upon which rest all the others, because expressing the corporeal.

"Ours is the age of the fleshly incarnation, the corporeal holds sway. This finds expression in the laxity of morals which, like the foe, is insidiously advancing upon our territory. The flesh is to-day dominant, for the corporeal is in expression."

"You may tell us something of the *decans* of our sun-period, and their significance as they relate to the sign *Pisces*."

To this Mona replied: "The three divisions of our sign are 'The Band of the Fishes,' '*Cepheus* the Branch,' and '*Andromeda* in Chains.'

"The starry 'Band' is significant of the conjoining principle; for in the sign *Pisces* Head and Feet meet. Here is Nature's matrix. *Aries* and *Pisces* unite the zodiacal circle."

"This is certainly true of our sun-period—we have the union of Head and Feet, or Intellect and Corporeality. This is in correspondence with the fact that the sign *Pisces* is now on the ecliptic. What can you tell us of its second *decan?*" the priestess added.

"The second *decan* is '*Cepheus* the Branch,' the King of Ethiopia or the celestial realm, as the old myths tell us. This signifies He who has come (the Maiden's Son), who will put all things under His Feet. Thus *Cepheus* is represented in the starry ciphers with his foot upon the pole of the heavens."

"Yes, the Virgin-born Son is to conquer in the flesh, putting the corporeal and material under His Feet. Now you may give us the significance of the third *decan* of our sign."

"The third division of our sun-period is symbolized by '*Andromeda* in Chains,' which expresses the attitude of the feminine, or intuitive, principle in this age of the 'Feet.'"

"Why is *Andromeda* represented as menaced by the Sea-Monster, '*Cetus* the Whale'?"

"Because Intuition is ever menaced by the corporeal and intellectual principle."

"Yes, the Divine Maid must suffer the advances of *Typhon* until freed by the celestial knight *Perseus*. You have given us some of the most salient teachings of these starry hieroglyphics; but the same will continually unfold in arcane significance to the student of the mysteries.

"How long will the sign *Pisces* remain on the ecliptic, and in which of its three divisions are we supposed to be now?"

"Each of the twelve signs is something more than two thousand years in passing the ecliptic. But since He, the Branch, has appeared, the *Magi* affirm that ours is the period of the second *decan;* for *Cepheus*, king of the celestial country, is now on the prime meridian. The fact that the Virgin hath brought forth, proves this to be our position in the great cycle."

Here the examination ended, and the "Rites of *Mylitta*" began. These prepared the novice for a fuller service in the temple, as this was an initiation into the "Lesser Mysteries."

A curtain is rolled away, revealing a stage where the mystery-drama is enacted. This opens with the arming of *Perseus* for his victory over the "Gorgon." A youth of more than usual beauty and grace of figure, is robed in the loose tunic which the old star-maps give to this hero. He is now surrounded by the gods who are to confer the armor.

From Pluto, god of the realms of shade, he receives the helmet which is to make him invisible at will. By *Minerva*, goddess of wisdom, he is furnished with the buckler, whose polished surface is to act as a mirror, reflecting the monster upon whom no mortal may look and live.

Mercury, the messenger of the gods, equips His feet and arms with wings, that he may mount into the upper air. He also bestows upon him a dagger of diamonds which slays whatever it falls upon. Then with the single eye of the *Graiae*, which will enable him to find the place of the monster's concealment, he stands ready for his enterprise.

In the next act *Perseus* is shown as executing the feat in all its details. The singular feature of this scene is that it is enacted within an enormous skull. That here is portrayed a victory over the sensuous nature, or the informing principle of sense, is shown to the Initiate whose previous instruction has made her familiar with these celestial ciphers; as well as with the ancient myths which interpret them.

The Initiate recognizes all the figures of the drama as belonging to the signs *Aries* and *Pisces*, or the symbols of the *Head* and *Feet*. Here are expressed the two planes of understanding, the sensual and the super-sensual.

The drama shows that the reversing, or turning about action of the *Medulla* makes this organ, which unites the two brains, the *Medusa* of the stony

charm. This renders man insensate to the higher vision of truth while held in corporeal bonds.

The victory over the *Gorgon*, of which the true knight is ever in pursuit, gives to the hero the celestial vision.

Then takes place the mystic betrothal of Perseus and the celestial Maid, at which the King and Queen of Ethiopia are present. In other words, the heavens open, reveal their secrets, and man is able to read the starry allegories.

Only the highest Chair can confer this wisdom, namely, "The Chair of *Cassiopeia*."

We cannot within the limits of this work do justice to the starry science. The sublime drama is, however, being constantly enacted; for the capture of the *Gorgon's* Head is ever the feat of the Hero.

The devotees of *Mylitta* are also still storing the sacred honey with an assiduity and patience which has its reward. For, ere they are aware, the simply sensuous view of things has gone, and the super-sensual has come in. The *Gorgon* of Sense is captured, and the divine betrothal has taken place. The celestial spouse is won.

CHAPTER VII.

On leaving the temple that night, Mona found herself in one of those exalted mental states from which the transition to the lower level of the commonplace which constantly makes its claim upon us, is not easy. She was on her way home where she must at once enter into the family life.

This she might later be able to do, but she must first have an interval alone. She could not meet any one just now. The oak coppice was near, and entering this growth she fell on her knees and poured out her heart in a pæan of thanksgiving.

Hers was the development which fails not to adorn truth with imagery, and thus her thoughts always shaped themselves. In the figurative language of her race Mona thanked God that her birth, both natural and spiritual, had been in the sacred island, so rightly termed "The Honey Isle."

Another cause for gratulation was that, in the first great swarming from the human hive her race had been the vanguard.

Then with a faith that raised her above the fears which had long agitated her country, the maiden

registered a vow not to be disheartened in her work.

Though the Roman legions did lay waste the land, and though their sacred groves were daily falling under the axe of the invader, she would not fail to so store the honey in the hearts and minds of her pupils that the divine teaching should never die out in Britain. Her forebears had founded the "Supreme Chair of *Ceridwen*" in that land where they had affirmed it should remain until the day of doom. Though she remembered sadly that it seemed falling more and more into disrepute with the people, she believed that God would again raise it up to its former prestige and honor.

On leaving the oak copse, sounds of hilarity greeted her ear, and immediately a loud hallooing was answered from all the neighboring fields and hamlets, until the night air was resonant with human voices.

The meaning of all this did not occur to Mona until she had reached the brow of the hill, so absorbed had she been of late in other interests as not to take note of the fact that the festival of the "Twelfth Day Vigil," was near. This was indeed the eve on which the vigil was always held, as she suddenly remembered on looking down at the fields below.

From her vantage ground she could see the groupfires in all directions, for this ancient festival was being celebrated throughout that entire region.

In the near wheat fields ten or a dozen of these group-fires could be seen from where she stood. These consisted of a circle of twelve small fires, and in the center one much larger than the others; for the mystic number thirteen was always represented. Here was a fire for each sign of the Zodiac, for the two Lions were anciently expressed in every portrayal of the zodiacal circle, as they are in the heavens where *Leo* major, and *Leo* minor are in close proximity. No representation of this mystical wheel was complete without the two Lions.

Soon a merry band of wassailers were seen in the near distance, and presently Mona plainly heard her sister's voice among them. The party consisting of some six or eight couples, was evidently making for the fields of "Bran, the Raven," whose hospitality was celebrated in that neighborhood.

This was the home of "Carac of the Grail," the only son of Bran. Carac was much beloved throughout the countryside for a certain sweetness of spirit, as well as for a hearty genial manner. In fact, his was a nature that radiated warmth and life to all about him, winning for him a good word from everyone.

Mona presently learned that her sister's associates on this occasion were certain young people from the neighboring hamlet whom she would not have chosen as Mira's companions. They were all apparently in the wildest of spirits, and evidently in

for what they would have termed "a rousing frolic."

These wassail-gatherings were open to all, and Mona suddenly resolved to follow and protect Mira from the consequences of any imprudence into which she might be led by her high spirits. The result of these festivals was often disastrous to the younger portion of the revelers.

They were soon on the premises of their neighbor Bran, who in the center of his wheat field with his guests about him was dispensing cider with liberal hand.

"Spare not the Cup, neighbors," he was saying when Mona came within reach of his voice. "Remember this is the feast of the 'Chalice.' The sun has just entered this starry emblem, and hence we drink together the beverage of *Cid*."

This called out an uproarious cheer, and the response, "Our ancestors believed that the juice of the apples of Avalon would warm the very cockles of the heart, and it does that same to-day."

The words spoken by their neighbor Bran, Mona had heard many times before in her life under much the same conditions; but they struck her now as almost a profanation. He had given the letter of the truth, to be sure; but how little did its ancient meaning find expression to the ears which he had addressed.

"The beverage of *Cid*," and the "apples of *Avalon*," what were they but terms to-day? So

also with the fact of the great luminary's stay in the "Chalice." This meant nothing to the people beyond the literal statement. To them it was simply a season of feasting and merry-making. Who saw now the great truths shadowed forth in the starry types? No one but the priests who recognized the fact that it was profanation to unveil their interior meaning to so material an age.

Mona contrived presently to find a place near her sister without mingling with the revelers. Mira was looking her best to-night in all the bravery of a new scarlet gown, while her fair hair was adorned with a wreath of leaves and scarlet berries.

Mira's escort on this occasion was a youth with whom Mona had never before seen her. Nor did she know her sister had ever spoken with "Ivan the Hare." That she should do so now filled Mona with apprehension, for Mira's companion was known by the starry blazonry of the "Hare" which was borne out both by his fleetness of foot, and a certain cupidity of nature which inclined him to appropriate his neighbors' goods.

How Mira could willingly have come in his company, and of all places to this house where Ivan would not be received at any other time, Mona could not reconcile with her sister's desire to stand well with "Carac of the Grail."

Had Mira done this in a spirit of defiance? It would seem so; for no one laughed more loudly or seemed merrier than she. Mona, however, had seen

the expression of disappointment which crossed her sister's face when a close scrutiny of the assembled company in the field showed her that "Carac of the Grail" was not among them.

Twice Mira had carried the flowing tankard to her lips in its round, but when she would have taken it the third time Mona's hand arrested hers.

"Dearie, thou dost not want any more. Thou wouldst not make a spectacle of thyself here," she said at Mira's ear. The latter turned angrily, but on meeting Mona's eye her own quailed before it.

"Why not, it is only the wassail Cup," she said. "Every one takes the wassail Cup. Thou hast often affirmed that cider is the sacred beverage. Where can the harm be then in drinking it?"

"Cider was indeed held sacred by our ancestors, but they did not use it as we do to-day. They would have regarded it as a profanation to so use it. To them apples signified joy of heart, which was man's first estate, but when he began to abuse with riotous use the fruits of nature, he lost not only their spiritual meaning, but also the happier estate which was earlier his."

"I do not see any harm in the wassail frolic. 'Tis 'the Cup' that makes the people social and merry. Thou art very strait-laced in thy ideas, sister. I cannot be like thee," said Mira swinging herself clear of the restraining hand which Mona had laid upon her arm.

Mona knew, however, that the consciousness of her presence would be a check upon Mira's wild spirits, and uncongenial as she found such surroundings she determined to remain beside her sister.

This "Vigil of the Twelfth Day" though a Keltic festival has always been associated with the divine Nativity, and rightly too.

Its celebration occurred in the Lion-month, August; which the whole ancient world held as sacred because of its *august* significance. Here the sun attained the *heart*-star of the Lion, *Regulus*, where the whole starry economy is shown to have consummated its great cyclic adjustment.

The month of August marked by the *Lion*, the Kelts termed *Ceudmhios*, or the first and the last. In other words, its sign was the *Alpha* and *Omega*.

"The Vigil of the Twelfth Day" commemorated the "Golden Age," when the gods reigned on earth. Hence the "Vigil of the Appearing" was held yearly when the sun entered the sign of the *Lion*, which sign marks the beginning and end of every great cycle. Hence the Lion has always been the symbol of entrance and exit.

Fittingly, too, does this emblem typify the *Heart* in which function life begins and ends. So does the life fluid which the heart sends forth complete its circle when it returns again to its source; for the blood is the sun-principle of the body, its life-giving energizing force.

When the sun reached the "Sickle of the Lion" the harvest was anciently gathered, for Nature kept to the order of the starry types.*

When the movement was finally made by the wassailing party towards the house Mona used all her powers of persuasion to induce Mira to go home, for she had by this time withdrawn her from her companions.

"Come, Mira, this is no place for either thee or me without our father. No self-respecting maiden would willingly be seen here alone," Mona said, finally, when she found gentler arguments to fail.

"I did not come here alone," was the other's retort. "I had companions till thou didst interfere. Now I am here I am going to stay. If thou likest to go home I shall not hinder thee. I can find friends in plenty." Saying this Mira made as if she would rejoin her party, now some distance ahead.

"No, Mira, I shall not leave thee. If thou art resolved to stay I will stay also," Mona replied, finding herself obliged to quicken her own steps in order to keep beside her sister.

On reaching the house they found the revelers gathered about the board, where a bountiful feast was spread. Here the usual large wassail-cake with a hole in the center graced the middle of the table. This cake, however, was not to be partaken of by

* Cæsar is affirmed to have landed in Britain on the twenty-eighth of August, when he states that the harvest was all completed.

the guests as all knew; but was to serve another part of the entertainment later on.

Carac was here, going in and out among his father's guests, with a pleasant word for all; while attentive to his duties as host in seeing that everyone partook of the cheer provided.

An expression of pleased surprise crossed his face on recognizing that Mona was one of the company. He at once hastened to her side with the edibles which made a word between them possible without attracting attention. It was months now that she had shut herself away from him, and he hungered for speech with her if only on the most prosaic matters.

"Thou art truly welcome, Mona. I little thought thou wouldst do honor to our feast to-night," he said, finding himself strangely moved by her presence.

"I am here for Mira's sake," she replied, refusing the dainties he made a feint of offering her. Finding he was disposed to linger by her side, she bade him not to leave his guests, since his duty was to them. She was merely an onlooker.

Mona felt on this occasion that she had never before known her sister, so transformed was Mira by excitement. She seemed to have entirely lost for the time her natural timidity, and in dash and assurance she eclipsed many a young matron whom public opinion privileged to come forward at these gatherings.

The revel was at its height when calls for "Carac of the Grail" were heard on all sides. "Where is our royal Cup-bearer? We will have none but him to serve us now. Has not Nature declared him a 'Knight of the Chalice'? We will take the Cup only from his hand," were the cries with which the room echoed.

Up to this time the circling goblet had passed from hand to hand, friend pressing it upon friend, whilst song and mirth went round the board.

Carac was greeted by loud cheers when he came modestly forward, deprecating in his heart the noisy acclaim of which he was the subject. Fearing this kind of demonstration, he had kept away from the fields earlier in the evening.

Presently a flowing tankard of home-brewed ale was passing through his hand to the elders of the company, while his deputies were serving the younger portion.

Not to have taken the cup from Carac now would have been an open insult which every guest would have felt called upon to resent. But when he passed it to Mona with the customary word, "wassail" * she replied, "Not the wassail but the grace-cup I drink to thee, Carac."

Later, when the company started for the wain-house, headed by the steward, who had the herds in charge, Carac walked with Mona, who now had Mira close beside her.

* *Waeshael.* Be in Health. "Wassail" is the usual spelling.

Standing before the finest ox in the stall, the master of the house filled a goblet with essence of barley, and forthwith pledged the bovine in a toast, whose mystic meaning is to-day lost; but which related to nature's generative power as expressed in the herds. This he did, calling the bovine by his name, while his friends did the same to every ox in the stall.

Then the cake was produced, and with much ceremony it was hung upon the horn of the animal first addressed. The creature was then goaded with a small stick, or stiff straw to make him toss his head, and the directions in which he threw the cake decided its possession, and also affirmed the bountifulness or sparsity of the coming harvest.

If the cake fell behind the ox, it was the mistress' perquisite; if before him into the bin, it went to the steward or bailiff. Every one's sympathy, however, was with the woman, as promising nature's fuller returns.

After this ceremony was over, the company again returned to the house to finish the night in revelry and song, but Mona succeeded now in leading Mira home.

It was a few days later that any one watching Mira as she moved about the house performing the light tasks assigned her, would soon have been sure that this young woman had, as the old people would have said, "a bee in her bonnet." That some scheme

was working in her brain those who knew her best would have perceived.

Just about dusk she hastily arrayed herself in an old camlet cloak that was her mother's, and stole out of doors. A few moments afterwards she was on the Fell road, and making for the mountainside. She was evidently desirous of not being seen, judging from the furtive glances which from time to time she cast about her.

CHAPTER VIII.

As "Bran the Raven" and his son Carac bear no inconsiderable part in our story, we will not longer delay introducing them more formally to our readers.

Chief Ravenson was a scion of the ancient "House of the Raven," whose founder "Bran Bendigied, or the Blessed Raven," raised the ancient fortress which bore his name, *Dinas Bran* (castle of the Raven) to which we have previously alluded.

Portions of the walls of this ancient stronghold are yet standing, and they are still claimed by the raven —the bird whose name it bore. Innumerable flocks of ravens now croak among its ruins, reminding us perpetually of the mystery which nature has committed to their keeping.

The raven was the ancient symbol of the conqueror. This device was borne upon the victor's banner. "The army of the Ravens" were noted British warriors who carried all before them when they took the field.

The banners of the "Raven-hosts" bore the symbol of the starry "Raven" or the third *decan* of the sign *Leo*. Hence the bird was held sacred by the

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whole ancient world. This constellation belonging to the heart-sign has always borne the name of "*Corvus*, the Crow or Raven."

The army of the Ravens was invariably followed by flocks of ravens, the bird which scents blood from afar, and consequently were greatly feared by the foe. As late as the sixth century we hear of the Raven-hosts, with whom even Prince Arthur dreaded to come into conflict.

Nature has in all ages borne witness to the truth of the principle symbolized by the crow or raven, which is generally victor in the field despite all the arts of man to defeat it by scarecrows and the like.

So does that principle of the heart which is signified by the starry Raven (the faculty of aspiration) get at the very grain of the *Word*, or its inner kernel of meaning, despite the creeds and dogmas in which man has draped it; for, "He hath put understanding in the Heart." "He heareth the young ravens when they cry."

Since Elijah was fed by the ravens, the prophets and Seers of all times have been nourished through this same principle of aspiration, a faculty peculiar to the heart, as even the stars affirm.

"Bran, the Raven of the South," had come among the Cumberland clans after one of those national defeats which South Britain had suffered at the hands of the Roman invaders.

In uniting his fortunes with the Cumberland clans Bran had settled to an agricultural life, and to the

rearing of his two children, a son and a daughter, who had early been left without a mother.

To his son he had given the old Keltic name of *Carac* because the boy was a heart-child. This name derived from *Car-dia* (seat of Deity) figured frequently in early British history where we always find a *Caradoc* or *Caractacus.*

The boy *Carac* had early proven this cognomen a fitting one because of his aptitude for getting at the heart of things. This predisposition his father had fostered, knowing it to be a legacy which had come down to him through the royal strain of his blood as a lion-child.

The old chief had sought no honors in his new surroundings, but it was not long before his gift of prophecy or augury, as it was then termed, became known; and thereafter his advice was sought in all civil and judicial questions. So sagacious was his reasoning, and so great were his powers of discernment, that the people looked up to him with a reverence rarely accorded to any other than the priesthood.

That nature had ordained him an augur was widely recognized because she had conferred upon him the blazonry of the "Raven," the bird of presage. Not only had his birth occurred in August, the month of augury,* but the sun had been in the Raven *decan* of *Leo.* This, added to the fact of his

* August is the month of augury because here the harvest is decided, and fittingly, because the heart-month.

pure Keltic blood, placed him in the order of the *Magi*.

In a criminal suit if "Bran the Raven" sat as twelfth man on the jury, every one felt that justice would be done the accused. The truth could not fail to be made clear through the deliberations of so august a tribunal; for the twelve signs, or the complete body, was anciently represented in the twelve jurymen. No trial would have been adjudged a fair one without this representation; for trial by jury originated in the teachings of Druidism.

"Bran the Raven" and his son Carac were like comrades in their intercourse. The elder had watched with interest the rapid ripening of the youthful mind, which was in accord with the period of his birth when nature is at the very acme of her power.

The evening on which we left Mira going on her mysterious errand up the mountain, Carac and his father were holding the following conversation.

"It has occurred to me of late, father, that the eyes of the crab give a hint of what is needed to extend the human vision."

Bran waited for his son to go on, but as Carac did not enlarge upon this idea his father asked in what way he thought the crab could aid in the matter.

"The manifold lenses in the eye of the crustacean are certainly a hint that vision is enlarged thereby;

for the sight of the crab, as you know, is adapted to a twofold medium—that of air and of water.

"An instrument which can furnish numerous lenses, I feel sure, would greatly facilitate human sight."

"But why the crab; are its eyes different from other shell-fish?" his father asked.

"Yes," was Carac's reply; "for they have the power of lengthening and contracting their eyes so as to concentrate upon the same focus a multitude of pointed or convex eyes, calculated for seeing the infinitely little.

"But," he continued, "they offer another and more wonderful suggestion still, namely, that man will one day put away his restricted external vision as he outgrows his present limited environment.

"Then the *external* view of things will be changed for the *internal.*

"When the crab *outgrows* his shell he casts off with it also, his external organs of vision. Why this fact should have any bearing on human vision was suggested to me by something that Mona once said. She was speaking of the crab as the symbol of the Breast, or Titan age, when man certainly had a closer visual relation with the planetary system, and ere obliquity came in to distort the starry ciphers.

"Since that time the human vision must have deteriorated. The eye has lost its original convexity, and must now be assisted by artificial

means, as the pedunculated eyes of the crab suggest."

"You may be right, my son, man's present restricted views of things spiritual is doubtless reflected in his more limited physical vision. As you say, the crab's stilted eyes have a converging power unknown to more flattened crystalline formations.

"Yes, and in that case why would not an instrument which could catch and condense the light by means of numerous convex lenses give back to man, in some measure, the old Titan sight by which his vision penetrated the ether that surrounds worlds now hidden from his view?" Carac spoke with an enthusiasm unusual to him, for his whole heart was in the purpose of aiding the people to a better knowledge of the starry system.

He had no sooner given utterance to his thought than he remembered what Mona had said when he spoke of this to her: and his face clouded.

She had replied. "This is the age of the Feet. Think not to make the people look to the starry highways. Our day will give to the world no discoverers * in the old luminous tracks."

"Your thought, my son, that the metamorphosis of the crab (which stands as a symbol of the Breast) prefigures the cyclic evolution of Man, is not without significance. It is true the crab casts its shell only as the same is outgrown, not at any stated period.

* A prediction verified, as science proves.

"So with man, he puts off the bonds of the flesh only as he outgrows its limitations; and this growth, as with the crab, is always from within—that expansion of spirit which puts off all bonds.

"The starry Crab, like its prototype on the sea shore, borne in on the flood-tide, teaches man this lesson, namely, that he also belongs to two worlds; to the unseen through his spiritual nature, and to the seen or physical by virtue of his breath. Fittingly does the Crab stand as an emblem of that function, the breast, which ushers man into his physical environment. He, too, is borne in on the flood-tide, and left stranded on the shores of Time." The old Chief spoke as if communing with his own thoughts.

After a short interval of silence the latter changed the subject by saying: "Since you have yourself alluded to our friend Mona, I will say what has long been in my heart. I was in hopes, my son, that you would some day bring her home here as your wife, for a nobler woman could not be found upon the soil of Britain."

"That is true, father. Mona has no compeers in the land, but she has chosen another vocation; she will be no man's wife. The life of Divine *aspiration* has won her heart, and she finds no place there for husband or children. So we will say no more about the matter, since it is not to be." Carac felt he could not again have this old wound touched even by his father.

He had, however, scarcely ceased speaking when the object of both their thoughts stood before them.

Mona had been admitted to the house by the old housekeeper, but the former's gentle rap at the door of the living room had not been heard either by father or son. Their voices had reached her, however, and knowing them to be therein she entered without further ceremony. Her excited manner told them at once that something was amiss, while her agitated voice, as she asked them if they had seen anything of Mira, betrayed the anxiety under which she was laboring.

"I have been looking for her the last hour. Where can she be?" Mona cried with a gesture of distress.

Mira had not been seen by either father or son that day, but they tried to allay Mona's fears by suggesting different errands upon which the missing girl might have gone.

"Mother says she left the house about dusk, at least she missed her soon after; but I have looked everywhere for her before I came here. I thought you would certainly know where she had gone, for—" here Mona checked herself; she would not say more lest she betray her sister's infatuation for Carac.

"Since you cannot tell me anything about her I must not linger," Mona added quickly, refusing Carac's assistance in her search, though he urged the matter. As she turned to leave the house father and son followed her to the door, where all noted

the fact that the heavens looked very threatening. A tempest of either wind or rain, if not both, was plainly imminent.

Finding that even now they could not detain her, Carac and his father both advised that she return home at once lest she be overtaken by the storm. Mira was sure not to be in danger since she knew every foot of the ground for miles about, and if caught in the rain she could quickly find shelter.

This was not what Mona feared. She did not question Mira's safety anywhere on the Fells, or even in the woods of that region. Mona would have been only too glad then, to have known her to be there even if alone, when she remembered her sister's late tendency to seek associates unfitted for her. It was not bodily harm she thought of; for if Mira were out on the hills, and were overtaken by the storm she, failing other shelter, would at once make for some old cromlech, or thickly wooded growth.

As Mona started homeward Carac called cheerily after her the old Keltic aphorism, "Who ever knew a bee caught out in a shower? You are sure to reach shelter before the rain comes."

To this Mona mentally responded, "The bee that is honey-laden, no; but I am allowing myself to be burdened with my fears." She strove now to dismiss them, determining to commit her sister's welfare to the hands of Him who careth for the least of His creatures.

The scudding clouds overhead, and the solemn sough of the forest all about her, made Mona hasten her steps, and it was well that she did so, for she had scarcely reached the refuge of her father's house when the valley was swept with a tempest of wind and rain not uncommon in that mountainous region.

Meanwhile let us follow Mira whom we left climbing the mountainside with a purpose which she would not have whispered to her bosom friend. This was to pay a visit to old Moll, the so-termed witch of the region, whose hut was on one of the lower spurs of the Cumberland range.

Here lived old Moll and her raven, apart from her kind, and ostracized by the whole valley for certain uncanny powers which she was believed to possess.

Nevertheless she was often sought by those who were suffering from some one of the many ills to which flesh is heir. Moll's pills and potions rarely failed to give relief; for the so-called witch had a knowledge of herbs which did not relate to their medicinal properties, but to their correspondential relation to the several functions of the body. In other words, this woman had an intuitive perception of the vibratory action which certain simples set up in the human economy.

Her visitors generally chose the shadows of evening to cover their movements, for even while believing in Moll's ability to relieve their suffering, they shrank from having the source of that help known to their neighbors.

Moll's power in this direction was affirmed to be due to her familiar spirit which had taken the form of the raven. Though the sacred bird was declared to be her helper she was none the less in bad odor from the fact.

Moll's nature was in truth an expression of the crow (her blazonry) rather than of the raven. Her power of divination, which at times took on the preternatural in character, was always exercised with a view to gain: she must see the gold which she demanded in the exercise of her craft, else she would do nothing. Moll had all the crow's love for glittering bits, and the cunning that she used in securing the yellow metal was indeed equal to that of the crow in getting at the golden grains of August.

Her small garden on the mountain side, and the cow pastured near by, were Moll's visible means of support, but she was the veritable crow in the taxes which she levied on the neighboring fields upon which she kept watch from her vantage ground, as her hut overlooked the richest farming lands of that region.

Since her blazonry was that of the starry *Corvus*, she believed it her natural right to secure such spoil as the growing grain might afford her, and like those of the crow her depredations were tolerated as a necessary evil.

What Moll did with the gold which she so rigorously exacted for the exercise of her craft no one knew. It was generally believed, however, that she

had a hoard of the yellow metal hidden away somewhere as snugly as it had been hidden a short time before in the Cumberland mines.*

A dissolute son had caused her much trouble, but he had suddenly disappeared, and for years had not been seen or heard from in the valley.

Was it for him that she hoarded these yellow bits, or for the love of acquisition? She was at least never known to offer gold when trading for the few necessaries which made up her simple menage.

It was believed that "Roving Tom" would some day come into quite a fortune. Was it to enrich this son that old Moll lived so miserly a life, trading upon the credulity of those who sought her cabin for the charms and amulets which brought her no small revenue? This was the query of the countryside.

Moll, however, had long since affirmed her son to be dead, and after a time, when he did not return, speculation regarding the destination of her hoard took another turn.

The day had been one of unusual heat for that northerly region, and the evening was sultry with no air stirring. Mira found the ascent of the mountain path a toilsome enterprise. So intent was she upon her purpose, however, that she took no heed of the

*The Camden collection of coins attest that gold was coined in Kimberlin's reign, while history affirms that one of the first acts of this king was to issue an entirely new coinage of tribute money.

clouds gathering about the mountain's brow. She was by no means sure that her toil would be rewarded, for Moll was not always to be found at home.

Fatigued and out of temper, Mira reached the hut which she had for some time observed was in darkness. Appearances boded a fruitless errand.

In response to her rap, however, she heard the well-known croaking tones of Moll bidding her come in, and she entered to find the old woman and the raven the only occupants of the little low room which constituted the interior of the beehive hut. This had not been the case on a former visit, for then she had met two other patrons of Moll, who, like herself, were disconcerted to be found here.

At that time Moll had been so exacting in her demands that Mira had been obliged to go away without gaining that for which she had come. Now she was prepared to meet Moll's requirements.

"Law! so ye hae coom agen. We didna expecit ta la een an ye, nor ta goold ye'r sa loathit ta part wi'!" cried Moll, including the raven in her plural pronoun. Here the bird croaked a repetition of the old crone's words, and was told by his mistress to shut up.

"Why dost thou keep that horrid black creature? People say it's thy familiar spirit?" retorted Mira, resenting the way Moll had received her.

"Folks can haive worser familiars nor a raven," croaked Moll. "*Hares* hain't naethin to boast an.

Ilka body speers ‘ Hares ’ are dooble lippet, theivin’ critters, afearn o’ their ain shadders.”

Mira winced. She saw that Moll knew more of her affairs than she had supposed. This, however, did not prevent her retorting: “ When thou talkest of thieves thou must include thine own familiar, for every one knows that the raven leads in the army of plunderers.”

“ Ta raven doesna tak what isna his ain! ” cried Moll. “ Didna Apoller’s bird ken that ta grains o’ ta heart-month belongit to ta raven? It’s his ain, an he isna afeart to clamor for’t ’fore man nor beastie.

“ Who mak ta raven to be allers myndin ilka body by his *Caw*, *Caw*, *Caw*, jest as plain as he can speck it, that ta corn is a coomin’? Tellyt me that an’ ye ken. There wudna be ony seed-corn didna ta Raven-Sun reepen it.” Moll’s blood was up, and she was defending herself behind the raven’s plumes.

“ I mynd they tak Apoller’s bird fer a fule, as if he didna ken a mon frae a skeercrow.” She added with no little dudgeon.

“ Well, so he is a fool or he’d let the corn alone, at least till it ripens, and not destroy whole fields of it while it is growing,” said Mira, under the common misapprehension in this matter.

“ Oh, law now! That’s ta crow. Ye’d ne’er catch ta raven destroyin’ ta Seed,” said Moll, a note of triumph in her voice.

"No, very true, we never do catch him, that's just the trouble," replied Mira who added with some warmth: "Apollo's bird is the White-Raven as every one knows. Not a vile black creature like that."

"So will Jackob be white, too, when he is verra, verra old," returned Moll with a leer; but she evidently saw that it was time to cry a truce, for she suddenly changed the subject by asking after the health of the old Chief, Mira's father.

Thus recalled to herself Mira answered shortly that he was "hawn." * She was not here to bandy words, and she would do so no longer. Ever since her entrance a certain question had trembled on her lips; but she had hoped that Moll would not oblige her to ask it. Now she must do so.

"Is it ready? I must go," she said rising, as Moll had placed for her a tripod stool on her entrance.

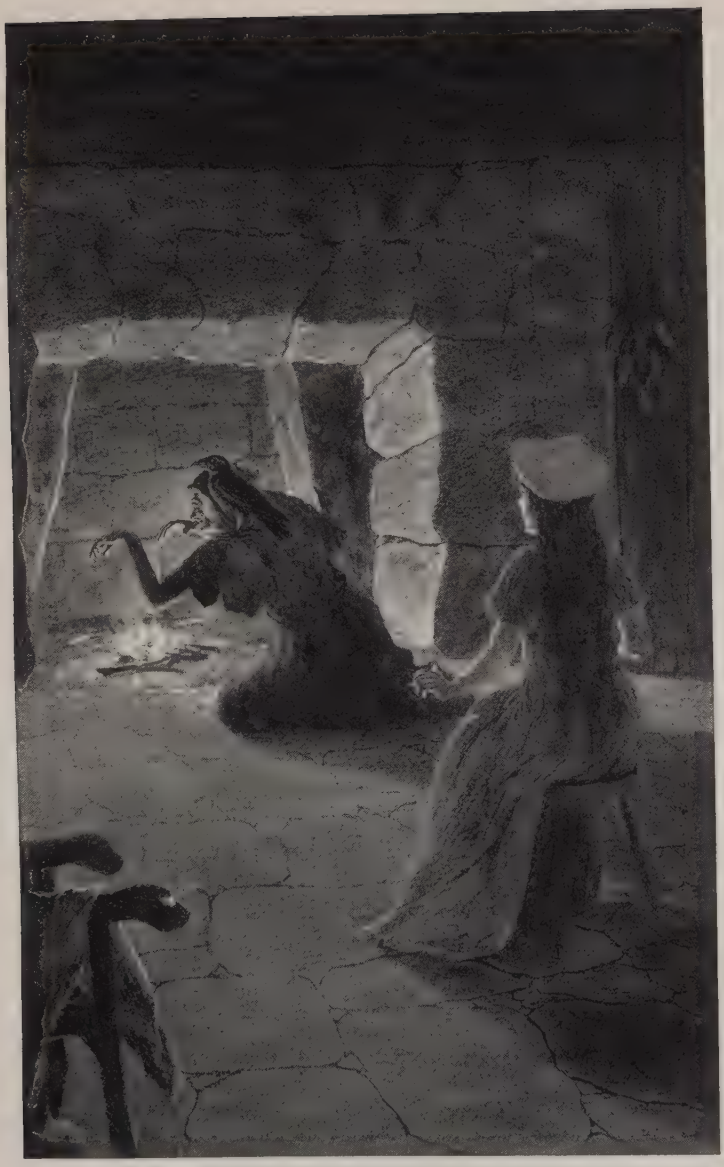
"Twa reedy a week sin; but I maun tellyt ye how to gin it. Phut it in water or apple jice, sturrin it hard, d'ye ken? else 'twill scum an betray ye."

"Yes, yes," said Mira impatiently, in her haste to get the packet and be gone.

"Be certin an' ye gin it to ta right mon," said Moll, with a wicked leer, "an' ye didna bale wud come on't."

"I understand," said Mira, shortly. "Give it to me," for Moll still held on to the bit of sheepskin

* Brisk, active.



THE HUT OF OLD MOLL, THE WITCH

containing the precious powder. "Here's the gold, I said I would bring it and I have."

She was in the act of taking the love-philter from old Moll's hand when the storm burst. The next moment the floods seemed to have been let loose, for torrents of rain were falling. The wind threatened to sweep from its perch on the mountainside the crumbling old hut in which they were standing.

Mira could not go now, and she sank down again upon the tripod, dizzy with fright, and covered her ears with her hands to shut out if possible the noise of the elements.

Above their roar, however, she presently heard the voice of old Moll in a seeming monologue, and distinguished these words:

"Tis ta *Thoghair*,* an' ta lion haive been rampin all ta day. I expecit ta floods wud coom doon." Moll rambled on, but Mira no longer followed her. She could think of naught else than the fears which now assailed her. Would she have to stay here all night? Even if the rain ceased, how could she go down the steep mountain path alone in the darkness, gullied out as it would certainly be by the torrents which were falling?

A blast presently shook the hut which made her look about in a terrified way for escape. The little structure held fast to its moorings, however; and Mira now happily remembered that it had stood

* August, or the Lion-Month.

here on this spur ever since she was born, and long before that, as tradition affirmed.

After a time she ceased to think of herself, for her curiosity was now aroused in watching Moll. The old crone was crouching over the few embers on the hearth, which she had blown into a flickering blaze, reminding Mira of what she had heard of witchfires. That Moll was using some incantation over these embers, Mira was presently convinced from the movements of her head and hands. Meanwhile she was muttering a kind of gibberish in a singsong tone in which her voice rose at times almost to a shriek.

The raven had perched upon her shoulder and he, too, was mumbling something which now and then was a repetition of Moll's words. It was impossible, however, to gather from either of their utterances any associated ideas.

Occasionally Mira would catch a word which would make her listen breathlessly for what might follow. But there seemed to her no coherence, though she came after a time to believe that these mutterings related in some way to herself.

That Moll was reading her—Mira's—future, in those embers, she presently felt sure. She listened, striving to catch some meaning in these utterances, until her fancy became so distorted that she could not distinguish Moll's tones from the raven's so completely did they seem to assimilate in a hoarse croak. It was no longer a bird, but an evil spirit

which had for the time taken on the guise of the raven.

Strained to a nervous pitch that made it impossible for her longer to sit quietly, Mira sprang up and rushed out of the hut in such haste as almost to precipitate herself into the ravine at the right of the path. It was still storming, but the wind and rain were preferable to the horrible nightmare she had just experienced.

While Mira is making her way slowly down the mountain, which descent required all her faculties of mind and body to be on the alert, we will return for a moment to the old hut.

Moll's visitor was no sooner gone than the old woman turned with an expression of cunning on her face, and peered into the corners of the room to make sure she was alone.

Then throwing some brush upon the embers she blew them into a blaze. By the light thus afforded she closely scanned the gold piece which had not left her hand since Mira placed it there.

Moll chuckled as she saw the impress of an " Ear of Corn " upon the coin. " They canna kape ta corn frae old Moll, ta Raven," she muttered; knowing she was thus called by her neighbors.

On the reverse side of the coin was the figure of a horse and the word *Cam*. This on the Camden collection of ancient coins is supposed to have been the first syllable in the name of the reigning monarch.

Old Moll, however, knew the original meaning of the Keltic word *Cam.* What more fitting than that this word, which signified the source and center of action, should be stamped upon the sacred metal Gold, a relic of the Heart-Age when it was stored away in Nature's bosom. To Moll it was a souvenir of the "Golden Age," and could bring only good to its possessor. Its market value was *nil.* She regarded the coin with a kind of superstitious reverence, as something not to be parted with.

Like the golden grains of the heart-month, Moll held the yellow metal to be her rightful inheritance from that age which had secreted the sacred ore in Nature's bosom.

Moll greatly prided herself on her blazonry of the "Raven," which she felt allied her with that remote period of which all tradition taught. That this conferred upon her certain gifts which set her apart from her kind, was a matter of faith with her. Uncanny these might be, as her neighbors said. Moll cared not for that.

For some little time Moll gloated over the gold as it gleamed yellow in the firelight. Then taking from the bosom of her gown several other coins she spread them out upon the hearth; and minutely examined each in turn. She noted their various stamps and inscriptions with the eye of one familiar with their designs.

Among them were several coins bearing the stamp of the "Ear of Corn;" but in the collection was one

which had in place of this symbol the word *Dias*, which is Keltic for corn, and also for Deity, or the "All Good."

The "Ear of Corn" as borne by the starry *Virgin* has always been the symbol of the "Promised Seed"; and it is a matter of significance that the coinage thus stamped was struck off in the reign of *Kimbelin*, Britain's King, at the period of the birth of Christ, as tradition asserts.

Old Moll did not return her little hoard to the bosom of her dress, but instead she put the pieces together in a pile, and then with some finely spun lamb's wool she wound them into a ball covering the gold entirely.

While she was doing this Jackob was still perched upon her shoulder watching her every movement. The bird evidently knew what the next proceeding would be, for the ball was no sooner completed than he anticipated Moll's purpose by extending his beak to receive it from her hand.

The next moment the little hoard of gold was in the possession of the raven who had received it with becoming gravity, quite as if he were the treasurer of his mistress's funds; and now awaited her further orders.

These were presently given, for with a sweep of her hands toward the smoke escape, a small opening in the stones of the fireplace, Moll uttered the single word "aloft."

This was no sooner spoken than the raven van-

ished through the aforementioned aperture, and was on the wing, soaring toward one of the loftiest peaks of the Cumberland range.

Where would her treasure be so safe, Moll reasoned, as hidden away in the mountain where God had first stored it? To be sure man had found it even there, but the raven alone knew her secret, and Jackob could be trusted not to divulge it.

CHAPTER IX.

One morning shortly after Mira's visit to old Moll, Chieftain Arthog hailed "Carac of the Grail" as the latter was passing, and bade him come into the house.

"Thou art a stranger of late, neighbor. Why dost thou not happen in oftener as of yore?" was the Chief's salutation.

To this Carac replied with a smile. "Perhaps I do not make as free with my neighbor's doors as of yore, but I have not outgrown the heart to do so."

The old Chief wished to inquire of him regarding certain dissensions among the clans which had lately reached his ears, and he at once entered upon the matter.

Carac was evidently informed as to the cause of the trouble. This had arisen, it seemed, through having received into their midst fugitives from other parts, who had sought this mountain region for the protection of their flocks and herds.

It is always the flocks and herds, or the great possessions, which cause strife and divisions, as between Lot and Abraham.

Carac was, however, disposed to take a hopeful

view of the case. The people would again settle to their old peaceful relations, since an arbitrator had been chosen by the various clans in the person of the old Chief "Pendragon" who was universally beloved and honored.

Carac had soon led his host to talk of other matters than the disquieting theme which had seemed to engage all his thoughts. The youth's sallies of wit, and the view that he took of their national disturbances through Roman rule and usurpation, acted as a tonic upon the elder man.

Rome might invade their territory, and even set up her gods upon their soil, but Britons would never bow down to them. Her reign would be of short duration.

Carac's visit on this occasion was prolonged beyond the usual limits of a neighborly call; for Chieftain Arthog detained him on one pretext and another, being loath to part with so genial a companion.

Finally, seeing that he could not much longer keep his visitor, who had risen to go, the old Chief called for cider that they might take the social cup together. This Carac could not refuse without a violation of courtesy, and for the second time he reseated himself.

Mira who had been in and out of the room several times during Carac's stay was bidden by her father to draw a *piser* of cider.

To "Carac of the Grail" this daughter of the old

Chief seemed still a child. "Little Mira" he had always called her. The bright kerchief which she had donned a few moments after his entrance, was lost upon him; as were the long braids in which she had hastily plaited her hair. This, she fancied, made her look older than when hanging loosely.

But if Carac did not notice these little feminine arts to attract him, Briga saw with much annoyance this byplay on her daughter's part. Twice she had sent Mira out of the room on some pretext, but only to see her return with an added adornment, and a fresh grace of manner or speech which called their guest's attention to her.

It was a grievous thing to Briga that a child of hers should strive to attract any man's notice; for the Kelts were more strict in these matters than the sternest of Puritan matrons.

When Mira returned with the cider for which her father had sent her, she was evidently under no little perturbation of mind. Even her mother could not account for this change of manner. Her previous nonchalance was gone, and in its place was an eagerness of bearing which would have befitted an action of vital importance.

When she attempted to pass the tankard to Carac her nervousness culminated, and nearly a third of its contents went on to the floor; for she was now shaking like an aspen leaf.

Carac could but see that something was amiss, though he strove to cover her misadventure, and as

he thought, her consequent confusion, by a laughing apology for his own clumsiness.

Taking the blame upon himself did not help the matter, however, for this Mira immediately disclaimed with a degree of agitation that seemed entirely uncalled for by so simple an accident.

Could her apparent distress have been caused by the fact that the cup had been spilled between them? This he knew many people would regard as an omen of evil. His well-timed raillery served to divert the old Chief's attention, and thus saved Mira the reproof that had been on her father's lips. A moment afterward Mira had escaped from the room.

It was a face stamped with misery that Mira raised to meet her sister's eyes an hour later, for Mona had found her lying in a heap upon the floor of her chamber.

For a moment Mona could not find speech to ask what the trouble might be, so startled was she at seeing Mira in this state.

"Oh, I know I have killed him. It was a love-philter. I got it of old Moll, and the cup spilled." Between hysterical weeping and broken ejaculations Mona learned that her sister was now fearing she had given Carac a fatal draught in that cup of cider.

Certain words which the old crone had muttered that night now occurred to Mira, and this coupled with the fact of the cup spilling between them had

goaded her to the distracted state in which Mona found her.

"Oh! I know I have killed him. Moll said the cup was full of sorrow, and there was no escape; but she said the bale was in the lees, and he drank only the lees, for the rest was spilled," moaned Mira, while her sister was making a mental digest of the situation.

"Killed him! Thou hast done nothing of the kind. The powder was harmless. Moll is too wise to put into thy hand what would injure any one. If she did such a thing, she knows it would come back upon herself; and she would be punished.

"But, Mira, when wilt thou learn wisdom? Thou shouldst not have gone to old Moll on any such errand. I am ashamed for thee!" and the elder covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, Mona, do not thou fret. If thou dost I will go and throw myself into the ravine, and then I can do nothing again to grieve thee," Mira cried clinging to her sister's gown.

Mona removed her hands from her eyes, winking away the tears that were ready to fall, while she said quite sternly: "Where didst thou get the gold to have dealings with old Moll?"

"It was my lamb-money that daddy gave me," said Mira shamefacedly, not able to meet the glance bent upon her.

"Why, thy lamb-money was to be a part of thy dowry. Daddy thought thou couldst be trusted to

keep that, else he had not given it thee;" Mona said with displeasure. "I shall try and make Moll give me back the gold," she added, "and hereafter I will take care of it for thee, since thou art too much a child to guard even thine own belongings."

Mira's face had suddenly brightened. To get back her precious gold piece, and to have done Carac no injury, as her sister affirmed, put quite a different face upon the matter. She would not throw herself into the ravine now. Life might yet have some pleasure in store for her.

We will here say that Moll did not give up the gold piece which she had taken from Mira in exchange for a bit of powdered chalk. Though Mona threatened to tell her father of the matter; the old woman persisted in her assertion that she had not the gold in her possession, and so could not give it back.

Mona used various arguments in her effort to make Moll disgorge her sister's treasure, but she was fain finally to take Moll at her word—she did not have the gold.

CHAPTER X.

"THOGHAIR," the month of the Lion, was held by the ancient Kelts, as it is almost universally throughout Christendom to-day, as a period of recreation and rest. To them, however, it was commemorative of that Sabbath of the race, man's first tropic or period of rest, when he, like the great luminary, was in the Heart-Expression.

Fittingly is it in the cyclic-period of *Leo* that *Regulus*, the heart-star of the Lion, attains that position which affirms the regulation of the whole starry system. This star was anciently termed the *Basilica*, or royal hall of justice; because of its august significance.

In the Sun's great cycle the sign *Leo* marks the period of man's cessation from labor. This is his true tropic or rest, when the curse of Eden is lifted; for here the heart finds that expression of which the prophecies teach. Like the starry scheme his great adjustment will also have come in.

Another Keltic title for the month we call August was *Ceudmhios*, signifying the *first* and the *last*, because this symbol of the *Lion* begins and closes the great cycle. In this period of midsummer

even to-day Christendom throws off the yoke of toil, and by mountain stream and wooded dell man returns, as much as in him lies, to that first estate of aspiration and inspiration which allies him by virtue of the heart, with Deity.

In the interval of *Thoghair* the pupils of the temple returned to their homes for the *august* month was kept as holiday-time by the Kelts. Thus it was that the Prince Arviragus was now at his father's court.

Since his home-coming the boy had talked constantly of "Leda, the Swan-Maiden," between whom and himself existed a comradeship which made him miss her extremely.

His mother, Cartismandua, the Roman Queen of Britain, as she was called, smiled at her son's enthusiasm regarding this Brigantine maiden. Her Highness, however, was soon moved by curiosity to see one whom the Prince esteemed such a paragon of all the graces.

So she prevailed upon the King, her husband, to summon Leda Ravenson to the court. The Queen desired to see for herself how a daughter of the Brigantes, a primitive British maiden, would carry herself amid the luxurious surroundings of a court. She did not then know that our "Swan Maiden" was a lineal descendant of the "Great Bran," the historic Chief of the Raven-warriors.

To the King's summons, "Bran the Raven," replied that his little daughter was highly honored

by the royal favor. That Leda should start at once for the court; and that he hoped she would be a good child while on this visit.

The royal seat at this time was, as history tells us—"That spot amidst the Chiltern hills in Buckinghamshire, where still appears a high, circular mound or keep, known to the present day as Kimble's Castle, while two adjacent villages bear the same king's name in defiance of the wreck of time and the lapse of centuries."

The villages of Great and Little Kimble are still known as The Royal Kimbles because this whole region was the ancient seat of monarchy. Here was the stronghold of "Kimbelin the Keen," * the Druid-King of Britain.

The romantic situation of this castle may well have made it a favorite residence of the Romanized monarch Kimbelin and his consort. From this ancient British fortress was to be gained an almost boundless prospect of surpassing beauty.

While this monarch had a number of royal abodes, this charming seat among the Chiltern hills we can fancy to have been furnished and adorned with truly Roman magnificence.

For the proud woman who was its mistress had not been reared at the court of Augustus without imbibing all the love of luxury which Rome at that day fostered. Though Cartismandua was herself

* His Romanized name was Cunobeline. The same was Cymbeline of Shakespeare's drama.

the daughter of a British King, she had been born in Rome, for her father was at the time held as a British hostage at the court of the Cæsars. He had married there, and his daughter, Cartismandua, had been brought up amid all the pomp and splendor of Augustus' reign, a reign noted for the extravagance and luxury of woman.

Like her father, she also had married in Rome; but she had wedded her cousin Kimbelin, heir apparent to the British throne, while he, too, was a hostage of Rome.

Kimbelin, "the Hero of Britain," as he was called, was knighted in Rome, and in the wars of Augustus attended on the Emperor's person. On the death of his father this British prince was called back to Britain to assume the royal sway, and his Roman-born bride accompanied him. The royal pair are said to have received a great ovation on their landing in Britain; and to have first taken up their abode at the "Castle of Beli," the seat of Cartismandua's great,-great-grandfather, "King Lud."

Coming from Rome, that most polished of cities, this haughty Queen regarded the land of her fathers as barbarian because it lacked the refinements and attractions to which she had been used. It was, perhaps, little wonder that she considered herself an exile in coming among her British subjects, whose simplicity of life and manners she held in disdain.

In his own youth Kimbelin, who is still styled

the Druid-King of Britain, had received Druidical instruction in Britain, and the after polish of Rome never effaced these teachings.

He naturally desired that his children should have the same high privilege. Hence the Prince Arviragus, his third son, had been sent into the country of the Brigantes, as here was afforded the best opportunities for Druidical learning near home. This, the King preferred to sending his young son to the more distant, but far-famed institution on the island of Mona.

Cartismandua had scoffed at the idea of her sons being educated in barbarian Britain and had strongly urged that Roman tutors be employed, but the King was firm in his purpose. Rome might later, if needful, fit them for the court and the camp as he had himself been fitted. He knew the foundation of all learning to lie in the mysteries of religion; and these were taught in their purity only in Britain.

The Prince Arviragus who was later destined to marry the beautiful, but unfortunate princess of the Brigantes; the British Boadicea, was the one of Cartismandua's children whom she would have singled out for a far less conspicuous rôle than that which Fate had ordained for him. Being of a sweet and docile nature this Prince in his youth seemed little fitted for the stormy part he was afterward called to play both in field and in court.

The Prince and his young visitor spent much of their time on horseback, riding over country where

the turf furnished a firm coursing ground for their chargers' feet. Leda was a fearless rider and could, at all times, keep up with her companion, leaping the ditch, or fording the stream, when needful.

This young British maiden, however, had taken the grandeur of the castle as one to the manor born. Though all unused to silken seats and couches, there appeared no lack of ease in her use of them now. Nor did the service at table overawe or confuse her, though accustomed only to the simple *menage* of old Betty who had the sole ordering of her father's house.

It greatly surprised Cartismandua that this simply bred maiden so held her natural poise where all was new and strange. "She is cold, insensate, and has no appreciation of the beautiful," had been the Queen's hasty verdict. This she had occasion to reverse later, for Leda proved herself a born enthusiast as regarded natural beauty. She never wearied of the glorious landscape upon which her eyes daily feasted. Where had she learned the graces of speech which would have been charming in the born princess? Then again, the simple dress of this Brigantine maiden, merely a robe of blue or white linen confined at the waist with a girdle, and leaving neck and arms uncovered, was worn with a grace which even the fastidious Cartismandua acknowledged.

As we have said, the young people spent most of their time among the Chiltern hills, mounted or afoot as the fancy pleased them. But one rainy

day finding themselves confined indoors, they were wandering arm in arm through some of the many passageways of the castle when they passed a door which was kept fastened, and which Leda had never seen opened.

"Oh, the Red Dragon holds court there," said the Prince laughingly when Leda inquired what was within.

"Dost thou keep a dragon at the castle? It must be thy father's treasure vaults are here; or is there a fair maiden incarcerated within these four walls?" Leda asked, taking her companion's words as pleasantry.

"No, there is truly a dragon here to keep away damsels like thyself who would peep into state secrets," said the Prince, enjoying Leda's momentary confusion; for she had been trying to get a glimpse of the interior through a crevice in one of the panels.

"To be sure it is dark enough for a dragon's den, but I do not believe there is any dragon within. I think thou didst not tell me truly," said Leda turning away.

"Oh, but I do tell thee truly. 'The Red Dragon' stays here, for it is the seal-room. As you say, he is not here now; but let us go and find him."

"Oh, I see it is some one whom you call 'The Red Dragon'—I ought to have known what you meant," said Leda, ready at once to make the *amende honorable.*

"Yes, the name is an official title, and I think if we can find the 'Dragon' he will let us into his den," returned the Prince, leading the way to another part of the castle.

When found at last this official was doing duty as a scribe, but to please the Prince he left his work and went with them to his *sanctum* to show them the seals of which he had charge.

On the way thither the Prince told Leda that now she would see "the seven wonders of the world," as the great seals were then called. Naturally the maiden's curiosity was somewhat whetted when the door was opened, and they were admitted to the dim obscurity of the seal-room.

The official removed the great shutters which excluded the daylight, and then taking a large folio from a cabinet he placed it upon a table. "Please tell me why thou art called the 'Red Dragon'?" Leda asked, as he opened the folio for their inspection.

"I suppose," she added, "that thy blazonry is the Dragon *decan* of the sign *Sagittarius*, but why art thou called the '*Red* Dragon'?"

"Yes, my heraldic device is the starry Dragon," replied the official, at the same time baring his arm and showing her the figure of a dragon pricked into the flesh with red ink.

"Thou must know, little maid, that *red* was anciently the color of secrecy. But if thou wouldst learn the arcane teachings of the *Dragon* thou must study the old myths."

"Yes, Mistress Mona has taught us that the dragon signifies to guard or watch over. Oh, I see you are the Dragon because you have Arthur's seals to keep," Leda said, regarding with reverence the folio whose time-yellowed pages were covered with heraldic devices.

"Why do you call them Arthur's seals?" the official asked.

"Why are they called seals, at all?" was the demure reponse.

"Because they are supposed to veil or conceal much teaching. In other words, they are very ancient hieroglyphics."

"Yes, and that is why I called them Arthur's. If they are heraldic devices it must mean that they proclaim or announce something, or that they were intended to do this," the maiden added.

"It is true that they were so intended, but their original meaning has become very obscure," was the official's musing rejoinder.

"Are they not beautifully colored? Who is supposed to have made them, and why are they mostly figures of animals?" Leda asked, hastily turning several pages as if she would grasp in a moment the contents of the folio.

"The Sages of Britain in their several ages made them, and termed them 'Closures,' claiming that they concealed from the profane the holiest mysteries.

"You ask why they are mostly figures of animals?

Can you tell me, my little catechizer, what animals signify in the great scheme of life ?" The official evidently thought he had puzzled the little maid with this question.

" Mistress Mona says that the different animals are the different expressions of qualities and principles which are manifested in humanity. If any of these were to become extinct in man they would no longer find expression in the animal kingdom."

Here the Prince interposed with a question. " Do you know," he asked " what the Sages meant this seal to represent ? "

The official looked very hard for a moment at the particular figure upon which the finger of the Prince rested.

" That is the British Arms where is portrayed the guarding of the crown by the lion, the unicorn, and the dragon, or the three royal beasts, as they are called," was his reply.

The young people could see for themselves what was portrayed on this seal. They were also familiar with the device, but what they wished to know was why these three particular animals were represented as guarding the crown.

The official seemingly could not enlighten them. At least he did not. But the young people presently remembered that he was not a herald although he *was* a dragon. It was his duty of course to *guard* the secrets committed to his keeping.

But while trying to elucidate the same, Leda re-

membered an axiom of her temple teaching which she thought threw some light upon the matter.

"'Words always have an inner as well as an outer meaning. A spiritual as well as a profane significance; and the latter shadows forth the former,"' she quoted.

"A seal is intended to hide or conceal from those who would pry into what is not for them. But a seal must be broken," Leda added, "before those who have a right can learn what is concealed therein."

Leda was looking intently at the British Arms. "I wish I could break this seal," she said with knitted brow. "It would not be wrong, would it? The Sages must have expected that their secret would some time be disclosed."

"Thou canst at least try, little Wiseacre, and if thou art able to break it thou certainly hast the right."

It was a few moments after this that the official was summoned to another part of the palace, but before leaving the young people he cautioned them to handle the folio with great care, and they promised to do this, feeling that Fortune had highly favored them in this opportunity.

"I think I partly know what this means," said Leda looking up suddenly at the Prince. "Dost thou not remember what Mistress Mona told us of the starry unicorn?

"She said that this one-horned animal was the

symbol of purity, chastity—that virtue which, like the mythical unicorn, is never captured but ever eludes the hunter."

"Oh, yes, I remember the myth in which she said this teaching was couched," replied the Prince. "If pressed hard by the hunter the unicorn is said to precipitate itself from the highest cliff, landing safely upon its horn. But Mistress Mona said this myth veiled very arcane wisdom."

"And dost thou not also remember what she told us of the Lion representing Love, the principle of the highest aspiration, which is the holiest emotion? The Dragon, as we know, always expresses the guardianship of something that is precious. I am sure," Leda resumed, "that these three symbols must stand for the principles of Purity, Love, and Fidelity. And see! they are contending for, and upholding the crown."

"Yes, but what crown do you think is meant here?" asked the Prince. "If this triple device is one of the ancient 'Closures' it does not refer to the crown of Britain. I think I know what it means," he added. "The crown which is shown to be contended for here is symbolized by the constellation called the 'Northern Crown,' this signifies the crown of the *Mysteries*. Dear Mistress Mona says this is the supreme diadem because it is attained only by those who are 'kings and priests unto God.'

"The fact that our British shield bears this device," the Prince continued, "would seem to prove

that this land guards the sacred crown. As for the *Dragon*, Britain is affirmed to lie directly under the constellation *Draco*; and our zenith star *Etanin* is in the head of the monster."

"Yes, so Mistress Mona says—that the *Head* of the Dragon signifies doctrine and dogma, this is why the Dragon holds the most prominent place in our zenith to-day. When Arthur comes, the constellation of the Dragon will have set; for then dogma and doctrine will be no longer needful to guard the mysteries."

While Leda was speaking, the face of the Prince had become radiant. "Dost thou not remember that my blazonry is the 'Hercules' *decan* of Scorpio; and in the starry scheme *Hercules* has his foot upon the Dragon's Head?" cried the Prince. His eyes grew moist as he added, "Thanks to my temple teaching I may be able to do this for myself; but if I only might be able to accomplish this same Herculean feat for Britain!"

"I believe thou wilt. Thou art the King's son, and if thou art ever called to wear the British crown, methinks thou wilt be able to slay the dragon. At least he will not rear his head as proudly as now."

"Thanks, little prophetess," replied the Prince, with a courtly bow. But he added gravely: "There is a time for everything. I would not have the mysteries profaned even though it would add the diadem of the Cæsars to my hereditary crown."

"No," said Leda with ready sympathy, "for thou wouldst then forfeit the starry crown."

Presently the Prince asked if she remembered the dragon-mirror in the banqueting hall:

"Oh, yes," returned Leda. "It is very beautiful; "but why is it called a dragon-mirror?"

"When I asked mamma she did not know. She said the mirror was a Roman antique, and had been among the treasures which she had brought with her from Rome.

"But Mistress Mona explained it to me afterward when I told her about it. She said it was evidently symbolical of the teachings of the starry Dragon. I described it as a crescent-shaped mirror framed in the coils of the dragon with its head upreared; and she thought it a very quaint and significant device. This was her explanation—'A mirror reflects, discloses what is brought before it, but it is mercury that gives to glass its limning power.' She said she did not expect me to fully understand her explanation because it deals with the mysteries for which I am not yet prepared.

"But I know she added something about bringing the wand of Mercury to bear upon the dogmas and doctrines, thus making them the mirror through which the Truth would be discerned.

"I am sure she meant," the Prince continued, "that the clear vision comes only with the highest consecration of the life principle. This is the mercury that enables us to see even with the natural

eye because it gives to the crystalline lens its transparency. I have learned this from my temple teaching."

After this the Prince and his companion studied the old folio to their hearts' content, and many were the wise guesses which they made at the meaning of its symbols.

It was shortly after Leda Ravenson's return home from this visit at the court that the death of the King was heralded through the land. The reign of "Kimbelin the Keen" had been a long and glorious one, and his death was regarded as a national calamity.

His kingdom was immediately divided between his widow and his two eldest sons. The Prince Arviragus was now withdrawn from Druidical influence; for his mother's policy was to favor, even more than had the King, the Roman power in Britain, which was bitterly opposed to the Druidical hierarchy.

The young Prince by no means yielded willingly to the coercion brought to bear upon him in this matter. The same had doubtless much to do with his freeing himself from the Roman yoke when the reins of government later fell into his hands through the death of two of his brothers.

This act required the more heroism on the part of the Prince because his brothers, in throwing off the Roman allegiance had paid the penalty with their lives; for Cartismandua's sons were true to

their British blood notwithstanding that the strain of Rome mingled with it.

Mona deplored the loss of her bright pupil, the Prince Arviragus, whose future career she watched with the greatest interest, continuing his mentor in the most momentous crises of his life. But we anticipate.

CHAPTER XI.

"Going to the Stones" was the common way of speaking among the Keltic Britons when they would express their assembling for the *Gorsedd*, or the gatherings of the "Supreme Chair."

England calls her supreme seat of learning to-day the Cathedral, a term which has the same significance as the ancient term *Gorsedd*. In the latter, however, was implied the chair of the celestial or heavenly wisdom because it had to do with the starry teaching.

This highest, or supreme chair, finds its symbol in the Chair of *Cassiopeia*. This Chair now appears in the heavens as empty and inverted, which was not formerly its position; for the obliquity of our planet is in accord with man's obliquity, or departure from his original perpendicular, hence our changed attitude toward the starry hieroglyphics.

The stone circles of early Britain represented the "Supreme Chair." Some of these circles remain more or less complete to this day. They were composed of unhewn stones, and each corresponded to a zodiacal sign. Whether there were twelve, or four

times that number, each was expressive of a constellation.

These stones were oblong in shape, and were placed upright at a short distance apart, in a position to form a circle. We would here say that in outline they resembled the old milestones which we all remember.

The question may be asked why these circles were always made of stones? We answer, because of the significance of stones, for the Druids were learned in the science of correspondences. Why have stones been used in all ages as waymarks and *boundaries?* They have been thus employed because stone in its supreme sense signifies the Lord and His kingdom, which is the boundary of all things.

The stones comprising these Druid circles were, as we have said, unhewn. No tool fashioned them. To use a hammer or instrument of iron upon them was prohibited. The cunning hand of the artisan could have nothing to do with their formation because of their internal significance.

The wisdom of the "Supreme Chair" had to do with that primal revelation which was made to the race in the beginning, and through which man held converse with the angelic world. This by means of the divine language of correspondences.

The Druids brought down this wisdom through an unbroken line of priesthood from the "Golden Age." The proof of this is to be found in the starry teachings.

THE DRUIDICAL CIRCLE

During the Roman invasion of Britain the wisdom of the "Supreme Chair" was trampled out, and the church has been dealing with heresies ever since.

The ancient Druidical declaration—that the "Supreme Chair" had been founded in Britain, and that there it should remain until the doom, is verified in Stonehenge, its most lasting monument.

As we have previously said, these stone circles expressed the zodiacal circle, which is the *boundary* of our whole solar system; for the sun and all the planets revolve within the area of the zodiac.

Hence we see why the Druids regarded these circles as symbolic of that boundary in the heavens which the twelve signs describe and designate. The teachings given by the Druids from these circles had to do wholly with the celestial wisdom.

In the center of these stone circles was another, and larger stone, called the *Maen Crair*, or Stone of the Testimony.

This was the altar stone upon which the high priest, or Royal Arch-Druid, stood while performing his office, namely, giving that testimony to the truth which is veiled in the starry hieroglyphics.

The significance of this central stone is very arcane. It bore the same relation to the circle which the great "Lion" of the zodiac, *Leo Major*, bears to the whole zodiacal circle.

Thus we learn that the mystical number *Thirteen* was expressed in these stone circles, as in the great zodiac where we find the two Lions. Here *Leo*

Major covers three of the Northern zodiacal signs. Hence we are here shown that the *Great Lion* signifies the Lord, who is the Overshadowing principle of all life. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega* because the *First* and the *Last.*

For this reason the *Maen Crair*, or Thirteenth stone, was the altar, or Holy-place, because significant of the divine Overshadowing.

This was the stone upon which fell the first rising beams of the great luminary when the sun was in the sign *Leo*, a fact of profoundly mystical significance to the ancient world.

The signs of the zodiac mark off the great divisions of the precessional period, or the world-year of the ancients. In other words, this circle in the heavens expresses the great cycle of the race. The twelve signs are the milestones of this celestial journey.

The sign *Leo Major*, as we have stated, was signified in the *Central* stone of the Druid circle; but on the other hand—*Leo Minor* designated the *Entrance* to the circle. The Lion has always been the symbol of entrance and exit. Even to-day if we would make an entrance-way peculiarly noble we always place the lion there.

Why is this but that the sign *Leo* is the first and the last Division in each great cycle. It marks that period in time when the race entered upon the great cyclic passage.

The Lion as the symbol of entrance is fittingly the Heart-sign, because designating the function

through which man enters upon the life-physical and the life-spiritual, since the faculty of Aspiration is peculiar alone to the heart.

The Lion, as the first sign of the zodiac, teaches the fact that here both the S-o-n, and the S-u-n enter upon their great precessional course.

The zodiac found in the temple of *Dendera*, Egypt, commenced with the sign *Leo*, thus proving Egypt some time in her career to have had the celestial wisdom.

To the Druids the sun's cyclic movement through these zodiacal symbols portrayed the twelve manifestations of man in his great cycle. The thirteenth symbol, that of the great Lion, signified the manifestation of Apollo, or the perfected, regenerated race.

All gatherings about the stones were held while the sun was above the horizon. The Druidical rites could be performed only in the eye of the light, and in the face of the sun; for they were symbolic of the S-o-n's course in His great cyclic revolution

The *Maen Crair* was occupied by the Arch-Druid in his pontifical robes, and wearing the insignia of his office. While gathered about the stones in three circles were the Druids, Bards and Ovates or disciples.

The first act of the Arch-Druid after mounting the *Maen Crair* was to unsheath the sword suspended from his girdle, and to hold it aloft before the eyes of the people, while doing this he cried aloud,

so as to be heard by all within sound of his voice, the words. "*Tanguefedd i chi.* The peace of God" (that peace which was in the beginning) "be with thee."

This was responded to by the circle of Druids, Bards, and Ovates in the single word "Peace." Then the sword was returned to the scabbard, and the ceremonial which followed was peculiarly impressive because it was a service in which types and symbols were brought to bear upon the minds of the people.

The question may be asked here why the sword, which is generally associated with combat, should have figured in this opening Druidical rite.

This weapon of warfare in its supreme sense signifies *Truth.* Hence it was held aloft before the eyes of the people. The Druidical policy was non-combative, and we are here shown that they had no combat with Truth?

The flaming sword placed "Eastward in Eden," and which turned every way to guard the Tree of Life, signifies the natural sense or letter of the word; for the letter is capable of being thus turned about. Hence the real or supreme sense of the Word, Truth is guarded from profanation.

The types and symbols used in the Druidical rites were significant of that great Restoration which the constellations teach. The Renovation, or renewal of Man, was the foundation stone of Druidism. For this consummation the planets roll, and the stars their courses run in the heavens.

CHAPTER XII.

It was while returning home from one of these gatherings that Mona chid her sister for unseemly mirth where strict sobriety of demeanor was required.

Mona had of late been unable to understand Mira's moods, which were apt to range from the highest spirits to a depression that almost took the form of melancholia. Mira was no longer open and frank in her confidences, while her habits were so irregular as to bring much discomfort into the domestic circle.

"I cannot do anything to please thee," she cried out at her sister's rebuke. "Thou art always blaming something upon me," was her added plaint, bursting into tears.

"Why, Mira! when have I blamed thee before? Dost thou think it right, thyself, to be trifling and disorderly in thy behavior at the Stones? If thou wouldst ever be reverent in thy demeanor it should be within the sacred circle, the holy place, consecrated to the divine mysteries."

"I was not disorderly, but I could not help laughing when the priest made that flourish with the sword and it went over his head. Then he almost

fell from the *Maen Crair*, he was so disconcerted," said Mira, laughing again hysterically, as she recounted the incident.

"Oh, Mira, thou shouldst not be so irreverent. It was no cause for mirth, but rather for sorrow, that the sword should fall to the ground before the eyes of the people.

"Thou shouldst know, sister, that the unsheathed sword is significant of the naked or unveiled truth. Hence our priests in the holy place draw it from the scabbard and hold it aloft. The significance of the starry teaching, however, is so far lost to the people that they fail to grasp the original meaning of this ceremonial and too often it does indeed fall to the ground.

"The fact that the people have so turned about these teachings to day, presages suffering for our land by the sword being turned against us.

"The language of correspondences, our inheritance from the 'Golden Age,' is passing out," Mona continued. "Its letter only remains. The people have lost the heavenly converse, and bitter sorrow and struggle will follow before it is regained."

"If God is good and knows all things why does He allow it?" Mira asked under her breath, awed by her sister's words, as well as by her impassioned manner.

"Why must the child be corrected for wrong doing when he suffers through the correction?" was the other's answer.

"How dost thou know so many things, Mona, that other people never think about?"

"I have been taught to seek in every natural phenomenon its spiritual significance; for the physical world is the mirror in which the spiritual world is reflected."

It was some two months after this that Mona returned home one night to find a cloud upon her mother's brow which betokened a serious mental disturbance.

"Where is Mira?" she asked; but Briga vouchsafed her daughter no answer.

"What is the trouble, mammy dear? And where is Mira?" she asked again, a strange fear suddenly assailing her.

For a moment her mother made as if she would put her away. Then she said in a hard, constrained voice: "Ask me not where is Mira. I have no such child."

"What is it, mother, tell me the trouble. If harm has come to Mira I have a right to know it; she is my sister."

"Speak not her name. It is to thy dishonor that she is thy sister, for she is a reproach to all with whom she claims kin," cried her mother, rising and putting away the arms which Mona had thrown about her.

A moment afterwards with a staggering step Mona had quitted the house. She must find Mira and bring her home. This was the as yet unde-

fined purpose slowly forming itself in her brain. Will and volition, however, were strangely at variance; for her limbs refused to perform their office. The shock she had received was too great to be overcome at once.

She would go to the oak-coppice and collect herself, then she would seek Mira. How long she remained here Mona could not afterward tell, but when she lifted her head, which had been bowed in her hands, she saw that the moon had risen, and the night was light about her.

With no clearly defined course of action she began the search for her sister, which was without result when the gray dawn crept over mountain, fell and woodland.

A week went by, and no one had seen Mira in the time. After that night of search on the Fell-side Mona attended to her daily duties, feeling assured that Mira had not put an end to her life when driven from home. She now knew her sister to have been forbidden the shelter of her father's house.

That the outcast was in hiding somewhere was certain. And that she had sought refuge among some neighboring clan was more than probable. Her father's daughter was sure to find friends in whatever direction she might go.

Meanwhile her mother's implacable mood had not changed, and the situation seemed more critical from the fact that her father was away from home;

and likely to be absent some time. Under the circumstances Mona hesitated to make known the fact of her sister's disappearance, and thus bring upon Mira's wrong-doing the publicity that would follow. So she held her peace, feeling sure that time would reveal the refuge Mira had sought.

But when a month had passed, and no tidings had come of her, Mona determined to make another effort to learn the whereabouts of her sister. She would go to old Moll, possibly the latter could enlighten her as to Mira's hiding-place.

Accordingly Mona sought the beehive hut perched on the mountainside, but Moll could give her no tidings of the missing one. She had not seen Mira, she said, since the night, now two years agone, when the latter had come to her for a love-philter.

When Mona was turning away, having failed to elicit any information from Moll, the latter called after her with the question.

"Why didna ye gang ta tha auld dragon? Mony's tha sacret tha dragon's a gardin'."

"Yes, the 'Dragon' is guarding the secret of all the ages," Mona responded, wondering to find this wisdom on old Moll's lips.

"I cannot go to the dragon-mound, however," she added. "It is too far away, but if I were to do so, I have not the Diviner's gift."

The dragon-mound to which old Moll alluded was some twenty miles distant, but it had once been

in great repute among the Kelts as a center of augury. All the ancient nations held similar mounds in high esteem, as these were significative of that center round which the pole revolves in the heavens. Here the starry Dragon ever keeps watch and ward; and here the record of all the ages is also kept.

In going down the mountain Mona saw "Ivan the Hare," enter the woods a short distance ahead of her. His movements seemed to betoken a desire to escape observation; but a moment afterward he issued forth again into the open. Then he turned suddenly and started off on the run, and presently Mona lost sight of him in the wooded growth at the mountain's base. That it had been his purpose to speak with her she felt sure, but apparently he had changed his mind.

Now that he was gone she regretted not having called after him. What could he have had to say to her, she asked herself. Then a sudden faintness seized her in which the power of vision failed, and she groped blindly for support as she felt her limbs giving way beneath her. For one brief moment she had yielded to her weakness. Then calling to her aid a powerful will she had stood erect, chiding herself that she had allowed fear to have the mastery.

She must get home at once since her errand had been fruitless. In order to make a short cut she decided to cross an outlying piece of her father's sheep pasture.

This was remote from the dwelling and a lonely spot at any time, but now it was gruesome in the extreme, lying as it did in the shadow of the mountain.

Mona instinctively hastened her steps, a strange feeling of oppression stealing over her, when suddenly her attention was arrested by a peculiar sound which seemed to proceed from an old sheep-hut lying almost directly in her path. This was a small structure of reeds and turf where the young lambs were sheltered during the cold spring rains.

As Mona approached it a familiar voice fell upon her ear, and in the instant she knew that her quest was ended. Within this hut where no one had thought of looking for her the wanderer had found a shelter.

Yes, Mira was at that moment lying upon its turf floor, her couch a pile of lambskins, with her three-days-old child beside her. The babe was wailing, and the poor young mother was crooning a lullaby.

Mona knew it was her sister's voice, and that her worst fears were to be realized. Summoning to her aid all the courage of which she was mistress, Mona entered the hut. As she did so Mira looked up and their eyes met. Then with a startled cry the latter buried her face in the lambskin which served her for a pillow.

"Why hast thou come? I want no one;" was her passionate but pitiful utterance.

Mona had taken in the situation at a glance. Her

sister had been ministered to here. Her more pressing needs had evidently been supplied by some hand; and whose but the father of her child? That he was "Ivan the Hare," whom she had just seen in the neighborhood, Mona felt sure.

"Mira, why has thou hidden thyself away here all these weeks, and given us so much anxiety?" she asked, as if this were the extent of her sister's offense.

Mira looked up quickly. She had expected reproaches. So she was still an object of solicitude. This was better than she had feared.

"I had no place to bide. Where else could I go when mother sent me out of the house, and bade me never come into it again? I think it was very hard in her." Evidently Mira felt herself deeply sinned against in this matter.

"But, Mira, thou shouldst consider what thou hast done. What cause thou hast given mother to be angry with thee."

"I have done no worse than others. Why should not I, as well as another, be a maiden-mother?" was the sullen retort.

"Oh, Mira, talk not of maiden-motherhood; thou hast not the least apprehension of the term. Thou art neither wife nor maiden. But thou hast consorted with a thief who has stolen the ewe lamb of our father's fold."

"Ivan is not a thief. It is not true what the people say about him," was the plaintive answer.

MIRA AND HER CHILD AT THE SHEEP COT

"If he had not been a thief he would have come and asked thee of thy father, instead of stealing into the fold and robbing him as he has."

"Art thou going to be hard on me, too, Mona? I thought thou wouldst forgive me, and perhaps get daddy to be good to me again."

"Thou hast deceived and disappointed me, Mira, I cannot all at once forget thy sin and take thee to my heart again as my innocent little sister whom I have so dearly loved."

"Oh, Mona, what is my sin? God made women to be mothers. We cannot all be saints like thee. If I have been so very wicked, why has He given me such a dear, sweet baby? Won't you even look at him, Mona?"

Though moved, Mona did not relent in the severity of her tone. Mira must be brought to see the sin she had committed.

"A dear, sweet baby thou sayest God has given thee. He may be seemly to look upon. He may even have all his members and parts; but thou hast nourished the egg of the Scorpion, and the sting is there.

"A child so begotten can but perpetuate the scorpion-breed, that taint of lust which is its natural inheritance. Having loved a good man as thou didst but a short time since, I cannot believe thou hast learned another love so soon."

"Though thou seemest to think I could not, I have learned a new love, one that thou wilt never

know, the love of a mother. Is there a holier love than mother love?" Mira asked fiercely.

"That depends upon the mother, whether her love for her child is merely the animal instinct which prompts even the dumb beasts to cherish and nourish their young; or whether her love makes paramount the moral and spiritual welfare of the being to whom she has given life."

Mira was not heeding her sister's words, for she had gathered the babe to her breast with the murmured ejaculation, "If all the world is hostile to thee, little one, thy mother will always love thee."

Presently, as if the child had brought her a better spirit, she said: "Thou must not think I have not been sorry that I deceived thee all. For baby's sake Ivan and I wish we had done differently." After a pause she added, "But I have prayed about it, and I think God has forgiven me. If thou couldst forgive me too, thou, and daddy, and—the rest! I suppose, though, the way I am to be punished is that no one will love me any more." Mira's lips had trembled as she spoke, and she had furtively wiped away a few tears.

Mona had been waiting for the first expression of penitence, or even a word of acknowledgment of wrong-doing on her sister's part. Now she was ready to grant what Mira craved.

"I have no right to withhold my forgiveness, sister, now thou hast asked it, and owned to thy

fault. I give it freely, and I will see that thou art made more comfortable in thy bodily estate."

Mona did not, however, embrace or kiss her sister at this time, but she set herself at once to bring order out of the disorder about her. Though she was kind and even tender in her ministrations Mira missed the caress which had always waited upon such services.

Before Mona left the house she had listened to the whole sad story. Mira had dwelt with pathos on the fact that "Carac of the Grail" had never returned her affection while her whole nature had cried out for his love.

In the meantime she had unfortunately been thrown in the society of "Ivan the Hare" who had lavished upon her the love she had craved. It seemed she had been in the habit of meeting him clandestinely for a long time. Her would-be-lover she had not allowed to come to the house, fearing her father's anger; for Ivan would not have been considered a fit mate for Chieftain Arthog's daughter. In all this confession, however; Mona noted that her sister put forward no claim to loving the father of her child.

CHAPTER XIII.

On reaching home Mona had quite a search for her mother whom she finally found in the still-room, sorting herbs for a brew on the morrow. The place had a pungent odor of the aromatic herbs here gathered; and the woman now engaged in sorting and tying up these fragrant parcels was a *connoisseur* in the herbarium.

Looking up as her daughter entered, she said: "It is well thou hast come. I would thou didst aid me in tying, or I shall scarcely finish before the darkness falls." As she spoke an expression of annoyance crossed her features, and she smelled quickly of the parcel in her hand, she had detected something unnatural in its odor. "This feverfew was not gathered on the full of the moon as I directed. It would have been more fragrant and less brittle."

Mona waited for her mother to dismiss the matter which seemed so disturbing, before she broached the subject that had brought herself to the still-room.

"Mother, I would have a word with thee when thou art ready," she said.

"I am ready now. What is it?" the elder woman asked, suspending her work to gaze in startled wonder at her daughter.

"I have found Mira," was the answer. "She is at the sheep-hut with her child, and I am going now to bring her home."

"Not here canst thou bring her. Mira has no home under this roof." As her mother spoke Mona noted that the color had suddenly died out of her face, and her eyes no longer met those of her daughter.

"Where is Mira's home then, if not here where she was born? If this house is too pure to shelter the penitent it can henceforth be no home for me, mother."

The elder woman made no reply to this, but her daughter saw that her hands trembled so she could hardly hold the parcel which she made a feint to tie.

"Mother, thy heart would ache for Mira wert thou to see her now, she is greatly changed, for she has suffered much. Through her maternity, however, she has gained a dignity which sits well upon her. Thou wouldst hardly know our little Mira. She is no longer a child, but a loving mother, and a repentant woman."

"I will not see her, why dost thou require me to reiterate this? It is well she should have suffered. Thou dost waste thy breath in pleading for her." Mona realized what this protest cost her mother.

It had proved a shock to learn that her erring child was at her own door. She was near breaking down; only a powerful will sustained her.

Seeing that her mother had closed her lips firmly as if meaning to say no more Mona felt she could not leave the matter here.

"Why art thou so severe upon Mira's fault?" she asked, resolved not to be deterred by the evidences of excitement which her mother could not conceal. "Has it never occurred to thee that thou art thyself not blameless in this matter? May not thy child's sin be the reflection of some form of evil in thine own nature, since she is thine offspring?

"The illicit consorting of Truth and Error is our national sin to-day; and naturally it is bringing in its illegitimate progeny. Darest thou to say that thy conception of Truth is the immaculate conception?

"Mother, search thine own breast for this sin which has found its physical expression in thine erring child ere thou refuse her the shelter which she has the right to demand of thee." Saying this Mona turned and quitted the room, so she did not see the tottering figure which caught at the still-room shelves for support. A moment afterward this woman had sank upon her knees with the cry: "My sin has found me out." The shaft of truth had struck home in the barbed words which her daughter had uttered.

Yes, the insidious doctrines of Rome were quench-

ing that light of the spirit which had always been the guide of her race. This was indeed their national sin, as her daughter had said. And was she herself guiltless? Had not the material prosperity of their enemies seemed to belie the old faith? Had she not found herself fascinated by the physical presentment of teachings which had once had only a spiritual significance to her? These were rapidly making their way among the people. Yes, the sin of the land was also her sin, and now its illegitimate fruits lay at her door.

Could she do away with this fact by denying it? Not at all. Like the child whom she had cast forth and disclaimed, so would her sin rise up to confront her. All that remained for her now was to make acknowledgment and what reparation she might.

Briga had been true to her blood in refusing to condone her daughter's fault. The Kelts recognized in the transgression of the law of chastity that violation of Truth which the term, *chastity*, originally meant.

Now that Briga saw in her child's offense the reflection of her own sin she was no less severe upon herself than she had previously been upon her erring daughter.

What Mona had affirmed was true. The pure teachings of the fathers had been corrupted by the false tenets of a materialistic faith whose gods were wood and stone, and whose precursor was the Roman Eagles.

The night was spent by Briga in a wrestling of spirit such as few of her race had ever been called to experience. But the dawn had brought her victory, for it found her at the sheep-hut.

Though Mona had promised her sister to intercede with her mother, Mira was entirely unprepared for so speedy a relenting on the part of her parent. Her mother's face had no sooner appeared in the entrance of the sheep-hut than Mira's hysterical screams woke the echoes of the neighborhood.

Briga was obliged to reassure and quiet her offending child, before she could make known her purpose. This she after a time accomplished. At least Mira's screams ceased, and she listened to the kindly words which her ears could hardly take in.

When she realized, however, that it was her mother who stood before her in the attitude of a suppliant asking forgiveness, Mira's overstrained nerves could bear no more. That her mother had been the sinner and herself the consequent sufferer put the matter in a way that refused to adjust itself in her brain. She lay as one stunned unable to comprehend this vicarious atonement.

But it was not until her mother took the child and laid it tenderly upon her own breast that Mira understood the fulness of her forgiveness. The next moment Briga had two claimants for the shelter of her arms; for Mira had thrown herself weeping upon her mother's bosom, and maternal love enfolded her with the babe.

Briga's one thought in seeking the sheepcote had been to confess her own pride and hardness of heart, and to bring Mira home; but her motherly fears were at once aroused by Mira's physical condition. Ministrations would first be needful before the sick girl could be moved.

More than once that day the anxious woman went back and forth between the sheep-hut and her still-room with fragrant concoctions calculated to soothe and strengthen the sufferer.

Her mother's efforts were so far successful that Mira, quiet, but sad-eyed, occupied the settle in the living room that same evening; and here Mona found her sister when she returned home.

Mona had not been unaware of the manner in which her mother had spent the previous night. She had also seen her leave the house at dawn, and knew that she had gone to make her peace with the erring one.

The look in Mona's eyes when she met those of her mother that night would have been ample reward to Briga for almost any sacrifice. Her elder daughter's commendation was very dear to this woman's heart. Mona, who had never given her a moment's anxiety, and whose clear mental vision seemed to pierce every fallacy, was her mother's conscience, we might almost say, so fully did the latter accept her daughter's standard of right and wrong.

Though Mira was again in her home she was far from being at rest there. Her father was still away

and his return uncertain; but not so her brother whom she was dreading to meet. How Rold would regard her now she had no data from which to judge.

Mira was aware that his office forbade his avenging her dishonor; for a Bard was not only prohibited from using arms but he could not even espouse a cause by any other active means, since in his sacred character he was a "Herald of Peace." It was his sole duty to make truth conspicuous.

When Rold came in that evening he looked at Mira for a moment as she lay there in the firelight, but compassion, tenderness, was in his glance. That he was not sitting in judgment upon her sins she knew at once; but rather that he was commiserating the suffering it had brought her.

His greeting was just what it would have been had she returned from a visit at a distance. He was glad to see her home again, and he said so with a kindly welcome.

A few days after this, however, when left alone with her brother, she called him to her side, and humbly asked his forgiveness for having brought disgrace upon him and her home.

Rold readily spoke the words which she had so hungered to hear from his lips. He forgave her; why should he not? She had suffered sufficiently for her wrong-doing, he thought. He did not find it in his heart to administer the rebuke which the

opportunity offered. But Mira evidently was not satisfied to leave the matter in this way.

"Oh, Rold," she cried, "I cannot think what made me do this thing. I did not mean to go wrong," she added, looking appealingly at him.

Rold waited a moment, swallowing down the rising in his throat before he could trust himself to speak. "Thy first error, my sister, was in allowing thy thoughts to wander or be disorderly. Our thoughts correspond to the flocks and herds, and are blemished or unblemished according to their nature.

"Thou knowest that when the sheep and lambs wander they are liable to come to grief at the teeth of the sheep-dog, which attacks and so drives them back into the fold.

"In other words, concupiscences (which are the sheep-dogs) also assail us when we permit our thoughts to stray at the bidding of the undisciplined will. These are sure to bring us to grief, and ultimately to drive us back again to that safe folding whence we wandered."

For the last few moments Mira's sobs had been audible in the room. When her brother ceased speaking she said humbly: "I suppose you mean that if my heart were not so bad I would not have wrong thoughts."

"Thine are sins of the head and not of the heart. Thou art overfond of thine own way, my hot-headed little sister, and unless thou dost more wisely exercise the faculty of the will; not allowing thyself to be

so much the creature of impulse, thou wilt always mispend thy powers, as doth the foolish ram in attacking the solid wall. Placing his hand upon the crown of his sister's head he added: "This, as the ancients taught, is the mount of Golgotha,* the place of skulls where the spiritual is ever suffering the crucifixion of Sense. Here the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world. In other words, Sense makes this function man's Golgotha."

There was silence in the room for some moments, and then Rold touched the strings of the old harp to a familiar rune.

* The terms Calvary and Golgotha had the significance of the place of skulls long prior to the advent of the Historical Christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mira and her child had scarcely found shelter in her father's house when the community was startled by the report that old Moll had been found dead in her hut, and that her death had been brought about by violence.

Jackob, the raven, had attracted attention to the matter by his singular behavior. It was evident that the bird was greatly disturbed about something, for he was making a very unusual noise, and flying wildly round and round the hut, not going any distance away from it, nor pausing a moment in his circling course.

When the cause of his disturbance was discovered, nothing could be learned from the bird's gibberish, though he kept up a constant chatter. That he had a story to tell could he have made it intelligible, every one who heard him, believed.

Old Moll's body was cared for by neighbors, and an effort was made to learn how she had met her death. For some reason suspicion had at once fallen on "Ivan the Hare," who, it seemed, had been seen by others than Mona in the neighborhood of the mountain, a spot he was not wont to frequent.

It was the general belief, as we have before said, that old Moll had a hoard of gold hidden away somewhere about her hut; and it was now thought that this had tempted Ivan to take her life in an attempt to secure her treasure. His well-known cupidity of nature bore strongly against him, while his well-attested timidity would seem to have made such a deed impossible.

He stoutly denied any knowledge of the matter, but in accounting for his presence in the neighborhood he had resorted to various prevarications, so that his stories did not hold together when summed up. Consequently he was put in confinement until such time as the case could be tried.

This could not take place until the general *Eisteddfodd* was held at the winter solstice, when judicial action would be taken in the matter.

Meanwhile Mira grieved inconsolably over Ivan's imprisonment, insisting that she was the sole cause of his being suspected. It was while ministering to her needs that he had been seen skulking in the vicinity of the murder. And the burden of her plaint was that she brought sorrow and disgrace upon every one who cared for her.

Mira's troubled state of mind seemed to reflect itself in her child, who had been weakly from its birth, and had not thriven despite the nursing and coddling which it received.

Thus the autumn wore away, and the winter came on. Preparations were now making for the solstice

celebration—that anniversary of the "Turning" which all the ancient nations observed. This solstitial season was termed "the dark period," and was held sacred by the Druids, because of its arcane teachings; for to them all of nature's phenomena were pregnant with spiritual meaning.

"The so termed 'Dark period' of the Druids, is supposed to have dated back to that remote time when the sun did not come into view, in the latitude of Britain, between sunset on December twentieth and sunrise on the twenty-second."

This period of the sun's *southing* was observed with solemn rites because of its significnace. It was a rest, or stand, on which all nature waited.

The *re*-appearing of the orb of day was hailed with great rejoicing. This was Nature's espousal—"Mother-Night," as the ancients termed it.

From this solstitial stand the sun starts upon that course through the heavens which rouses into action all Nature's prolific forces.

The *forty hours* of the sun's *southing* were to the Druids, significative of the forty weeks which follow, in which Nature is nourishing the life that she is to bring forth perfected in the sign of the *Virgin*, the symbol of the great cyclic harvest or bringing-forth. The coming in of the "Promised Seed" is the cyclic-harvest, which, like the yearly harvest, is ultimated when the sun Overshadows the symbol *Virgo*.

The solstitial ceremonies of the Keltic Britons

took place at what is now known as Great *Salkeld* or *Salkeld Regis*. All judicial examinations and criminal decisions were made here, where to this day in the lofty rocks on the west bank of the Eden are to be seen the twelve niches, or seats, in a semi-circular order which were occupied by this tribunal. "These stalls excavated in the solid rock resemble the stalls in an ancient cathedral."

In these stalls sat the twelve jurymen while on duty; for trial by jury, as we have previously stated, is an ancient Druidical institution. In the twelve men chosen for this purpose the twelve starry blazonries were expressed; the whole grand body was thus represented.

To this ancient Thingstead came all the Brigantine clans with their chiefs to celebrate in Great Nature's temple one of her profoundest mystery-teachings, namely the *Stand* of the sun at the winter solstice.

All the ancient nations recognized the fact that in the period of the sun's descent in the "Goat" sign Nature receives that quickening life germ which ushers in her fecundity. Because of the sun's *southing* here, this sign was called the "House of the gods."

In the ceremonial rites of the Druids at this period was shadowed forth the cyclic stand of Man, or the S-O-N, in the great processional drama. Since it is from his stand in the symbol of the starry "Goat" that the race arises to renewed life. Here

is begun Nature's travail with Benjamin, which is to be consummated in a virgin-born-race in the sign *Virgo*.

While the twelve stalls, or niches, were on the west bank of the Eden, the opposite banks, also rocky, were overgrown with shrubs and trees. Midway in the stream, however, between these two banks was erected a white throne built of the sacred stone, alabaster. A bridge of the same connected this seat of judgment with the west bank, and the cathedral stalls.

This throne was the Judge's seat, the "Supreme Chair." We are told that the court of Pluto held its judicial seat in the land of the *Keltae;* and that here causes were determined by incorruptible judges. "There could be no higher compliment paid to the most sacred characters than to enroll them in this high trust of Judicature."

This was called the "Court of Pluto" (god of the realms of shade) because it held its sitting in the "dark period" while the sun was southing. Its Chair, or Throne of Judgment, was, as we have said, erected in midstream; the waters of the Eden constantly washing its base. One of the pillars, or supports of this throne, is still standing in a singular column of masonry six or eight feet high, conjectured to have been constructed from a quarry of fine white alabaster near by.

The seat of Judgment was occupied by the

Royal Arch-Druid, wearing the robe of his office with all the jeweled insignia pertaining thereto.

As has been said, these tribunals were held at the solstice when the sun entered the starry "Goat," the emblem of the mounting and conjoining principle.

For arcane reasons, flowing water was anciently termed the "goat," and the fact that the Chair of Judgment was erected in the current of the Eden has mystical teaching.

At the knees of man (where is the goat-function) the synovial fluid must flow, or movement, progress is impossible. The body-social no less than man in his individual expression, is the manifestation of the goat *principle.* This not only joins all the members of the individual organism, but it also unites in one great body the whole human family.

We cannot here enter into all the arcane significance of this sign, but will simply say, the starry "Goat" is shown to be the symbol of the articulate body as expressed in the bony structure of man, where the joints unite all the body's various members and parts, and aid in every movement made by man.*

Every ceremonial observance of the Druids was correspondential, Nature furnishing them the type and symbol. But the spiritual meaning which they

* The Keltic Britons called January, or the *Goat month*, *Gionbhair*, the love month, because of Nature's amour with the sun.

saw in all her phenomena as related to man gave to their observances a sacred character which our modern world fails to understand.

When the religious rites which the solstice season brought were ended, civil and criminal questions came before the Chair; and here, with other culprits under the law, came "Ivan the Hare," for his trial.

In Ivan's case the evidence against him was wholly circumstantial. He had been often seen in the neighborhood of the mountain hut. He was also known to have had gold in his possession soon after the murder was committed. In fact he had offered the same in exchange for food.

When first charged with the assault upon old Moll it was shown that he had made no plea in his own defense. To be sure he had stoutly denied any knowledge of the tragedy. But he had never satisfactorily explained why he had been so often in that region immediately previous to Moll's death; so naturally his denial of the crime went for little with his accusers. His previous ill repute told strongly against him.

But what bore hardest was his inability or unwillingness to explain why he had been so often skulking in a region where there was no ostensible cause for his presence.

The evidence had all been taken, and then Ivan himself had been allowed to speak in his own defense. He admitted having been in the vicinity

even on the very night when it was claimed the murder had been committed, but he had known nothing about it. He was not guilty of the crime.

"Why had he been there at all? What had called him to the vicinity of the mountain at that time?" At these questions Ivan hung his head, and made no reply.

An ominous silence had fallen upon the court when this was broken by a woman's voice crying: "Let me pass! For God's sake, let me pass! and pressing through the throng gathered upon the bridge came Mira bearing her child in her arms.

The crowd parted to make way for her, and she paused not until she had reached the Judge's chair. Then laying the child at his feet, she begged to be allowed to speak in defense of the accused.

Permission being granted her, she seemed for the first time to realize the situation in which she had placed herself, with the eyes of all the assembled clans upon her. Had she not been the daughter of one of their great chiefs whom they all loved and honored, the cry of "Shame upon her," would have gone up with one acclaim.

But only for a moment did this little creature flinch before the ordeal. Then in faltering tones, and with bowed head she told her story to the Judge. Ivan had been often in the neighborhood of the mountain because near its base was the sheep-hut where for weeks she had hidden her shame. Mira did not spare herself in this avowal. The gold

piece which had been believed to fix the crime upon him she had given him to provide for his own needs.

Mira's tale when repeated by the Judge found corroboration in many points, and moved those hearing it to sympathy. She might have been weak and erring but her puny strength was pitted against a man's passion, and the warmth of her own nature.

That a dauntless courage animated her small frame, as well as a high sense of justice, she had amply proven. Nor were the assembled clans now slow to acknowledge their recognition of qualities which a ruder age held in higher esteem than the gentler graces of womanhood that appeal to man to-day.

Cheers for the daughter of their Chief who by her brave action had shown herself worthy of her sire, were given with one accord, while Mira lost herself in the crowd, desiring only to escape observation.

That her testimony had operated in favor of the accused was at once evident. A man could not be wholly unworthy for whom a woman had so specially pleaded. A fair hearing of Ivan's case was had, then the jury took their seats to deliberate as to his guilt or innocence regarding the death of old Moll.

The result was a disagreement, for while the murder could not be fastened upon Ivan there was a division of opinion in the matter.

"Bran the Raven" was for acquittal, feeling sure that the accused had not the courage to have attacked old Moll whose valor in arms was well known.

"Why has the cognomen of the 'Hare' been fastened upon him but for his timorous nature?" was a question the old Chief had put to his conferees.

"Bran the Raven" was confident that the deed had been done by a bolder hand, and though his opinion had weight with his associates no agreement could be arrived at and hence a decision could not be rendered.

When this was made known, the Judge rose in his chair, and lifting his hands heavenward said: "The case will be carried to the 'Higher Court.'" He then resumed his seat while the prisoner was led away.

Chief Ravenson was now deputed to have recourse to augury in the matter of old Moll's death, to learn if thereby light could be thrown upon the manner of the same. The Keltic Britons left no stone unturned to procure evidence which should clear the innocent and punish the guilty.

Previous to the trial of "Ivan the Hare" the old Chief had spent whole days in the hut on the mountainside, for he had been indefatigable in his efforts to get at the facts in old Moll's death. Not only had he striven to discover the hiding-place of the hoarded gold which had been the probable cause of the murder, but he had also searched for every vestige of the struggle; for Moll had not proven an easy victim as marks upon her person testified.

During all this time the Chief had closely watched

the movements of Jackob. He had finally become satisfied that the gold was not about the hut, nor had he been able to gain any clue to the matter through the Raven's mutterings.

After sifting well the evidence given at the trial, he felt morally certain that "Ivan the Hare" was innocent of the crime. He determined now to try a ruse whereby the bird might be made to discover the hiding-place of the gold. The fondness of the raven for glittering bits of metal was well known to the Chief, who argued that the association between Moll and the bird had been so close that it was impossible the latter should not know where she had bestowed the yellow pieces which she was so greedy in gaining.

Accordingly, after the trial he repaired again to the hut. What was his surprise to find that it had been occupied in his absence! Some one had certainly slept and eaten here; for the shakedown of straw upon the floor, which he had himself carefully scattered in his search for the gold, had been drawn together again in a heap, and now bore the impress of a form, while the remnants of a meal remained on the hearth, as well as the vessel used in cooking it.

Jackob was on his perch, however, keeping his lonely vigil. That he had been disturbed by the recent intruder was evident, as he at once began scolding angrily when the Chief entered. This the bird had never done on any previous visit. "Why,

Jackob, dost thou not know thy friends?" the Chief asked, endeavoring to smooth the ruffled plumage of the bird. This seemed presently to have the desired effect, for the raven became quiet, or comparatively so, contenting himself with an occasional gibe at some enemy.

Waiting until the bird's excitement had subsided, the Chief placed a coin within easy reach of his claw. Jackob did not offer to touch this, though it was evidently an attractive object to him as he kept his eye upon it.

Then the Chief held it toward the bird saying tentatively, "Take it, Jackob." The raven needed no second bidding, but immediately seized upon the coin. Then flapping his wings for flight he disappeared through the flue which acted as a smoke conductor to the hut, and this before the Chief recovered from the surprise of such a movement on the bird's part.

Hastening to the door of the hut he saw the raven as we have shown on a previous occasion, making for the tallest peak of the mountain, where as before he alighted.

"Ha, ha! so Moll's treasure box is the 'Vulture's Nest'? a safe hiding-place surely, for that peak is inaccessible to anything without wings. A very cunning device which could have originated only in old Moll's brain. If the raven can carry he can also fetch," the Chief ruminated; but would the bird honor any demand for the strong-box which did not

proceed from his mistress? This was yet to be learned.

The Chief waited for the raven's return, which was not long delayed, for, as he expected, the bird came back without the gold. He had deposited it, and now returned to his perch where he sat watching his visitor closely. Meanwhile the Chief was meditating as to what his next move should be.

He finally decided to try his powers of persuasion to secure that deposit in the "Vulture's Nest," as this peak of the mountain was called.

Jackob had readily obeyed the Chief's order to take the gold. Now he would command him to go and get it. Several times the Chief repeated this command with varying inflection. But Jackob sat as stolidly under this order as if he had suddenly lost the power of hearing.

The Chief, now remembering that Moll had not been remarkable for gentleness of speech, used a different tone. "Go and fetch me the gold," he said somewhat roughly, making at the same time a sort of menace toward the bird.

"Shan't have it," cried the raven as if the retort had been surprised from him. The Chief had not been prepared for this, as he had not before gathered from the bird's mutterings any coherent utterance. The way in which Jackob had said this showed the Chief that it was an expression familiar to the raven, and that it had been on his lips before. The

words had evidently been extorted by the pretended menace. The bird must have heard old Moll say this, and to whom but her dissolute son?

The Chief now brought out three more coins. These he laid upon a stone set fast in the earthen floor of the hut. As the raven took no notice of this action, the Chief turned them over several times, taking care that they should ring upon the stone. His ruse was successful. The raven left his perch and would have alighted upon the shoulders of the Chief, but for the sudden movement of the latter in covering the coins with his hand.

This arrested the raven who still hovered near, flapping his wings as if only waiting for an opportunity to filch the coins and be off as before.

This, however, was not the Chief's purpose. He wished to see how a number of these pieces together would affect Jackob. The raven must have fetched the gold from time to time to his mistress when she had a mind to make up her accounts, and learn the extent of her accumulated treasure. It was not possible that she had given it to Jackob bit by bit without having tested his ability to fetch as well as to carry. She must have occasionally desired to see the little hoard growing in the "Vulture's Nest," and to learn that this unique hiding-place was safe from the birds of prey which here had their eyries.

Suddenly the Chief started with a gesture as of mingled surprise and fear. Was this a bird or an evil spirit in the guise of a raven? If not the latter,

how came this creature to know the stamp of these several coins? He was certainly enumerating them correctly, giving to each the design stamped upon it. So startled was the Chief at hearing this from the bird, that at every approach of the latter the man waved him away with his hands as he would have warded off the advances of a foe.

This gesture of the Chief's was one with which Jackob was familiar, and the force of habit was too strong with him not to obey it though the customary word "aloft" had not followed. This movement signified to Jackob that he was to bring the treasure that these glittering bits might be added thereto. The next moment he had seized an old lamb's-wool sock that hung against the wall and instantly disappeared as before through the flue.

Again the Chief watched him in his flight. He saw the raven alight at the same place on the cliff. A few moments only had elapsed when he spread his wings for a return. He then circled several times about the lofty spur, as if rejoicing in the utter freedom of his altitude.

While the bird was still high in the air, the watching Chief saw that he held something in his bill, something that showed white against the glossy black of his breast.

Yes, the raven was returning, and he held depending from his bill the old sock. That this was heavy now became at once evident.

"Ah! What was that?" The Chief knew only

too well what had caused that sudden panic and flutter of black wings ; for at the instant an arrow had sped from the underbrush at the base of the mountain, and with such unerring aim as to take the bird on the wing. Uttering a hoarse scream, the raven fell into the valley below with the gold for which he had, like his mistress, given his life.

Nothing remained now for the old Chief to do but to try and learn who had shot that arrow. It must be some one who knew the secret of the "Vulture's Nest," and who, like himself, had been watching the bird's movements ; for heretofore Jackob had been allowed to come and go without interference. No enemy had lain in wait for him.

Whoever the archer might be he had known that the bird had the gold. Of this the Chief felt sure, and also that this person had lately been an inmate of the hut where he had maltreated and intimidated the raven because he had been unable to make the bird obey his behests.

Probably the raven's life had been spared previously with just this purpose in view, to take him on the wing with the gold. This to the Chief seemed to prove that he who aimed the arrow was familiar with Jackob's habits.

Before nightfall the wooded region at the base of the mountain was covered with scouts in search of the murderer of old Moll. But notwithstanding the search was diligently maintained for days, neither the culprit nor the gold were found, though the

raven's remains strewed the ground where he had fallen.

Chief Ravenson resorted to augury only in a question of life and death, for he recognized it to be a divine science, and hence not to be perverted to the more trivial affairs of life.

He felt sure that it was old Moll's son who had perpetrated the terrible deed, and justice demanded the punishment of the crime.

Accordingly the old Chief made a journey to the far-famed dragon mound where Moll had once suggested that Mona should go to learn the whereabouts of her sister.

This was one of those ancient temples found among all learned nations, and termed *Dracontia*, because these expressed that circle in the heavens where each revolution of the pole records a great cycle, and within which circle the starry "Dragon" keeps watch and ward. The *Dracontia* mounds were of a serpentine form, enclosed within a circle, the larger mounds having the loops or coils represented in the constellation of the "Dragon."

This circle in the heavens described by the revolutions of the pole was termed the "Round Table of Arthur," because here the record of every great cycle is kept. Hence these mounds were often used as the repository of records relating to the cycle.

Chief Ravenson had taken the pains to provide himself with a chart of the heavens at the time the murder was committed, and now on arriving at the

mound of augury he took the points of the compass, and then divided the circle into twelve mystic houses, apportioning to each a zodiacal sign, the position of which was determined by the "Head of the Dragon."

Then instead of fixing his attention upon the circle enclosing the mound, the Chief directed his gaze to the sky directly overhead. Seeing a bird in the near distance he became at once alert. As it came into fuller view he recognized that it was not the kind of bird regarded as sacred because of its correspondence with the mysteries.

He continued to watch the heavens but he had not long to wait. The sweep of wings was heard, and a raven circled overhead, pausing for a moment in its flight. The Chief was quick to note that the bird had taken his new departure from a certain point of the heavens which corresponded with the twelfth house, or that of the sign *Leo*, and from that division of the sign allotted to the starry "Raven." *

He also noted the fact that according to his chart the Dragon's Tail had been at the time in the arrow-*decan* † of the sign *Capricorn*. So a raven and an arrow were to be associated. He had known this before but the fact had gained a new significance.

What the old Chief gathered from his visit led him to search for the arrow that had pierced the raven's breast. This missile of death he eventually

* Corvus. † Sagitta.

found, and from its peculiar construction a train of evidence was educed which not only proved Moll's son to have been her murderer; but which ultimately traced him to his haunt in the mountains where he had become chief of a gang of freebooters who had long troubled that region.

Though years intervened between the finding of the arrow and the capture of the brigand band, Chief Ravenson never despaired of bringing the culprit to justice. Time indeed saw "Roving Tom" suffer his deserts, as we shall later show and fully acquitted Ivan the Hare of any complicity in the matter of old Moll's death.

Ivan, however, had not to wait the finding of the real culprit in order to gain his liberty. This came in time for him to stand by Mira's side when her child drew its last breath; for in little more than a twelvemonth the feeble flame of life had flickered out. But this was the only occasion on which "Ivan the Hare" was ever allowed to enter the house of Chieftain Arthog.

CHAPTER XV.

It was shortly after "Cadallan, Prince of the Brigantes," had wedded the widowed Queen of "Kimbelin the Keen," that his daughter, Boadicea, found herself sadly needing womanly advice other than that offered by the haughty dame who was now her father's spouse. Hence she sent the following message to her friend Mona.

"Come to me, dear Mona, for I need thy gentle presence, and also thy wise counsel." Mona determined to heed this call at once, realizing something of the situation in which Boadicea found herself under the jurisdiction of a step dame in the home where she had so long held undisputed sway.

This marriage of the Prince of the Brigantes with the widowed Queen *Cartismandua* had not only overthrown his daughter's supremacy in the home, but it had also brought a disturbing element into the Brigantine policy; for *Cartismandua's* well known fealty to the Roman power caused her to be called the "Roman queen of the Britons."

From this marriage, however, was to come the alliance which eventually united the Scots and the *Iceni* with the *Brigantes*.

Cartismandua was queen over a portion of the *Iceni* when she married Cadallan, and whether ambition to extend her domain, or sentiment alone, had prompted this mature woman, the mother of grown sons, to make this espousal, it would be hard to say in the light of what followed.

The noble character of Cadallan might well have won any woman's admiration. But *Cartismandua* must have greatly changed her sentiments toward this British tribe, the Brigantes, to have wedded its barbarian chief, as she would once have termed Cadallan.

His first spouse had been the noble *Europeia*, sister of *Metallanus*, King of Scots. She had borne to him the son and daughter who were destined to become the most distinguished figures of early British history, Caractacus and Boadicea.

Cartismandua also had a son by this name, and in history he is often confounded with the hero Caractacus, the son of Cadallan.

Boadicea was still a maiden in her father's house when she sought her friend Mona's advice. This was in regard to the alliance proposed for herself by her stepmother. The latter wished her youngest son the Prince Arviragus, to wed this British princess.

Cartismandua's only daughter had previously been united to Cadallan's son, Caractacus. These marriages were desired in order to fortify the Brigantes against Rome.

Boadicea's heart was as yet in her own keeping,

though the Prince Arviragus had proved no indifferent wooer. The natnral gentleness of his nature, combined with the habits and tastes of the scholar, may perhaps have been detrimental to his suit with a maiden possessing the characteristics of Boadicea. These may have seemed to her to denote effeminacy, weakness, traits with which history does not charge this prince.

The eldest son of "Kimbelin the Keen" had, previous to his father's death, been exiled to Rome by the royal mandate; so two brothers still stood between the Prince Arviragus and his father's realm. Had this not been the case possibly *Cartismandua* would have looked elsewhere for a bride for the Prince Arviragus. She could not at this time have foreseen the rank which Boadicea would presently hold as sister of the King of Scots, to which dignity her brother *Caractacus* was suddenly called by the death of their uncle, *King Metallanus*.

Mona found her friend Boadicea considering this proposed alliance with the Prince Arviragus very much as she would have considered any strategic movement which had for its issue a chance that it might aid in ridding her country of the foe upon its soil.

With Boadicea her country was ever first. It was her ambition, and for it she believed that woman as well as man, should live and die.

"If thou do not love this prince whom they would have thee to wed, and than whom there is none

better in the land, be true to thyself and refuse this union. Otherwise thou wouldst make an unholy alliance," Mona said, in the first conference she held with her friend.

"That is not the question," Boadicea replied. "I have never asked myself whether I love the prince or not; but I am constantly asking, will my marriage with him strengthen the British cause." She presently added, "I cannot forget that the Prince Arviragus has the taint of Rome, and I would sooner wed my father's meanest vassal in whose veins flows the pure Keltic stream than transmit to my children the blood of adulterous Rome, even though it might be through the imperial Cæsars."

"Thou art right, thou shouldst seek to keep pure the old blood. But rememberest thou not that though born of a Roman mother, the Queen *Cartismandua* is on her father's side a descendant of our British King *Beli* the Great? Her paternal line is an ancient British one. The Prince Arviragus has always given strong evidence of his Keltic origin in his love of the mysteries. In all my teaching I have never had a pupil who showed a greater zeal for the divine science.

"Mayhap," Mona continued, "thou wilt not find in the Prince Arviragus a great warrior if thou art looking for material arms to save our country. If it is saved, however, it will be by such as he who manfully stand by the arms which heaven has conferred upon them. Nature proclaimed him a

Hero at his birth, for his was the starry ensign of Hercules."

"Oh, Mona, thou hast ever the right word. Life as seen through thine eyes, is never commonplace nor prosaic. Thou dost show me that I may safely unite myself with this prince, who, it seemeth, hath won thy regard and confidence. God grant that I may prove no unworthy spouse of a Hero-husband."

To this Mona replied, "Thine own blazonry is that of the starry Dragon,* and perchance it is through thy blood that the ancient line of Kings † is to be preserved. It may be thine as a dragon-princess to guard the old Keltic stream in our day."

"If so," Boadicea replied, "may God give me many sons and daughters; numerous as they may be they shall all be nourished at my own bosom. No degeneration from their parents' blood shall be possible to my offspring through being fostered by hirelings." Boadicea always entertained all the British matron's prejudice against an infant being nursed by other than its own mother.

This conversation between Boadicea and her friend was hardly concluded when the Prince Arviragus was announced. The latter was in full armor. All the trappings of war adorned his person, and when he entered the room where Boadicea and her

*Draco.

† The great-great-grandson of Boadicea is styled the first Christian King of Britain.

friend were sitting they were startled by this august appearance, not at once recognizing the Prince thus arrayed.

This equipment, however, well became the noble mien and bearing of the Prince, who at once approached Boadicea evidently unconscious of the presence of any one else in the room.

As he advanced she retreated, for she had risen at his entrance. She, however, was the first to speak." "What meaneth this?" she cried. "Why comest thou in this array as if thou wouidst attack my father's castle?"

"I come not to besiege thy father's castle, fair Maiden; but to storm the heart of his daughter, Boadicea. I have used all the arts of peace to win thee, and have failed. I then bethought me of the arts of war, for win thee I must."

While the Prince was speaking Boadicea had kept her eyes upon the floor, not venturing to raise them and meet the glance bent upon her.

"I like not the arts of war. Wouldst thou take me as thou wouldst take a fortress? I am a woman and so cannot be taken by siege."

"I would take thee by any arts by which I could win thee; but since thou likest not my armor I will lay it off." Saying which the Prince at once removed the helmet which had given an unnatural fierceness to his countenance. Then laying off his shield and unbuckling his sword-belt he laid the whole in a pile upon the floor. He now stood in the

tunic and embroidered mantle which was his usual costume.

"See, I have laid aside the trappings of war. I surrender all to thee, dearest; and now I ask thee, wilt thou wed with me, Boadicea?" The Prince had dropped upon his knee, and had taken in both his own Boadicea's unresisting hand.

"Yes, Arviragus, I will wed with thee, for thou hast a warm advocate in thy suit in our friend Mona; but for her I had not known half thy virtues," saying which Boadicea turned to include her friend, whose presence the Prince had not recognized; but Mona had quietly withdrawn from the room.

Finding that she was alone with her lover Boadicea added, "I have one request to make of thee. It is that our marriage shall strengthen the British cause. I would have thy promise that Britain shall always be first with thee—that naught shall come between thee and thy country."

"Knowest what thou dost ask, dearest?" The Prince had suddenly grown serious of mien. Did he have a prevision of what the future was to bring. It would seem so at least; for he replied—"Nothing, not even my country, shall come between me and thee, my love. Thou shalt always be first. My country shall be second only to thee. Thou canst not ask more."

"Be it so, then," said Boadicea meekly. "I will be thy wife whenever thou willest it."

The Prince regarded her with eyes full of love

THE BETROTHAL OF THE PRINCE AND BOADICEA

for a moment, then he said, "See, I kneel to thee because I seek with thee that celestial conjunction which my attitude implies."

At this Boadicea dropped upon her knees, and was immediately clasped in her lover's arms. As he drew her head to his breast he said, with loving tenderness: "Thou wouldst have me without armor, but with my arms I take thee, and with my arms I will hold thee till death do us part." This was sealed by a mutual embrace.

"This is our betrothal," said the Prince, who added fervently, "I swear to be thy true and loving husband; and God judge me if I keep not my vow to thee this day."

The dwelling of Cadallan, Prince of the Brigantes, deserves a word in passing, since it was one of those quaintly constructed habitations of which mention is made in ancient British writings, namely, "The Oak-tree dwelling."

The earliest abodes of royalty were always constructed from the Oak or heart-tree, as were later all edifices of worship.

The most primitive of these dwellings consisted of five large oaks placed one in each corner, and the fifth in the center. The trunks were hewed nearly square while the branches were entirely cut away. The tree was always inverted, the head being set on a large stone which was laid at some depth in the ground. Hence the roots were uppermost and

formed the foundation upon which the turf, or thatch of the roof was laid.

The central beam of the dwelling was often of immense size, sometimes affording in its interior ample space for my lady's bower. The Oak-tree-dwelling was no small or mean habitation, but frequently contained many rooms and passages.

Those tent-shaped domicils had a peculiar significance to the ancient Kelts. "To dwell in tents" was to know the holy things of love, and they reared their homes about the heart-tree as expressing that center which is the *alpha* and *omega* of all things. But the central beam was peculiarly sacred as the place of the *Overshadowing*.

To Mona it seemed almost a sacrilege that *Cartismandua* should with her lust for power and temporal possessions, have been installed as mistress of this heart-tree home.

She who had been its real mistress was the noble *Europeia*, who had brought to her husband, the Prince Cadallan, that noble son and daughter, the offspring of a pure affection, the illustrious Caractacus and Boadicea.

The presence of the Roman queen in her silken draperies was in Mona's eyes a desecration of the bower which had been made for *Europeia* in the very heart of the oak-tree-beam, the holy place which Love had overshadowed, and hence the temple of the home.

Cartismandua's presence here, however, was but

in keeping with other innovations which Mona knew were destined in time to make the Brigantes the ready allies of Rome.

It was during Mona's stay with Boadicea at this time that the latter one day propounded to her friend the following question,—"Canst thou tell me what this marriage of my father with the Roman queen expresseth in the spiritual? It would seem that neither of them at their age should have been prompted to this step because of a merely physical attraction. I know thou sayest that the physical is but the reflection of the spiritual; but what bodeth this union to our people?"

"Thou wouldst know the significance of this marriage of thy father with the Roman queen? To my mind it presages the alliance of the Brigantes with the foe. Our tribes which have held their liberty no less dear than their lives, will be forced by this union to yield their necks to the yoke, as has our great Chief to the matrimonial halter that Rome has imposed through the wiles of a woman.

"While this marriage foreshadows an extended temporal empire for the house of Cadallan, its spiritual issue will naturally be to give greater scope to the heresies of Rome, that swaddling of the old faith in bands which will eventually prove its grave-clothes.

"Rome rightly calls herself 'Mistress of the World' for with her seductive grace of doctrine she confounds truth and error in the minds of men,

while those high in her authority pillage the land, and ravish its women.

"The two ever go hand in hand, adulterous doctrines in which Truth and Error hold consort, with plunder and prostitution which are their natural outcome. The sanity of man and the virtue of woman are alike the prey of the enemy."

"And must this go on?" cried Boadicea. "Can nothing save our nation from subjection to Rome, and from this swaddling process which is stifling the very life of our institution?

"The arms of Cadallan, my father, have exempted us from the paying of tribute money to which extortion the tribes generally have acceded; but what is this I hear of the Brigantes accepting a loan from the enemy? Cartismandua, it appears, negotiated the matter; and, with a policy of her own, she regards it as an amicable adjustment of our relations with the new government. But I fear it is the first link in the chain which is to fetter the Brigantes, who have never before known an obligation."

Little did Boadicea then dream that she would herself in her own person bear the scourge of Roman* rods for this same debt.

"Thou wouldst know if this must go on? If nothing can be done to save our people from subjec-

* For this obligation to Rome into which *Cartismandua* had drawn the Brigantes, was Boadicea scourged by the Roman soldiery, an indignity which her brother *Caractacus* amply avenged.

tion to Rome? I answer, Yes. Concerted action on their part, a unanimous uprising of the tribes under their chiefs would drive the foe from our land. But this uprising of the people is as unlikely as that our great Cadallan should rise up and repudiate the Roman queen whom he has wedded. "Such a general stand for truth and liberty is not to be looked for, because the serpent principle is now the dominant one with man." Mona spoke sadly, and Boadicea knew that her friend saw no way out of their country's strait save that heaven should directly interpose.

That heaven had indeed interposed in the phenomenon of a divine incarnation these two but dimly apprehended. How the virgin-born Son was to work weal to the nations was a problem with which they could not cope, any more than does the race to-day. That this advent was the foreshadowing of the great cyclic Appearing was understood only by the Magi.

A favorite retreat of Boadicea's was a deep ravine not far distant from her father's dwelling where wild flowers grew in great profusion. It was not their charm alone, however, which drew her to this spot. Here she could be free to spend hours in meditation without risk of any one disturbing her. The love of solitude had grown upon Boadicea since the advent in her home of the new wife who now held sway there.

Oftener than she was herself aware she sought the seclusion of the ravine to hold counsel with her thoughts, for there was nothing in common between herself and the haughty woman whom her father called wife.

Naturally she turned her steps in this direction with her friend Mona; for within doors they could have no assurance that they were not objects of *Cartismandua's* surveillance. Boadicea had soon learned that the Roman queen was jealous of all influence, other than her own, over her stepdaughter. So Boadicea's and her friend's daily rambles were more and more prolonged as the former recognized the fact that *Cartismandua* kept a watch upon their movements.

One afternoon they had tarried in the ravine so late that the stars one by one began to appear. "The night will soon be falling, we must return," said Mona, suddenly springing to her feet; for she knew that the twilight did not come early in that high latitude. She was putting together the flowers they had plucked preparatory to leaving the ravine when Boadicea begged a longer grace.

"Thou wilt not be with me but a little time now, nor will I much longer be able to rove abroad in this manner," said Boadicea, thinking of the day, now near at hand, when she would be a wife. Seeing that her friend hesitated she added "We shall not be missed. My father has the companionship of his new wife. Tarry a little time. What matters

it if the stars do look down upon us? Thou surely dost not fear their companionship," smiling.

Mona reseated herself on the turf from which she had a moment before risen. "No, only on thine account did I propose that we return. Thy father may think ill of me for keeping thee abroad so long after sundown."

"Oh, he heedeth not my movements in these days. Knowest thou not that two mistresses cannot bide in one house. I am a superfluous member of the household." Boadicea spoke a little sadly, but her voice had taken on an entirely different tone a moment later when she begged Mona to talk to her about the stars.

"This is just the time, we could not have a better one for starry converse now that they are looking so solemnly down upon us," and Boadicea settled herself more comfortably in the grassy nook where she was lying at full length, her eyes upturned to the blue vault where glimmered innumerable points of light which we term stars, but which are in reality systems of worlds; types of eternal Truths.

"I will tell thee an allegory," Mona replied after a moment of thought in which she had been closely regarding her companion.

"There was a great King who had a son very dear to him, and to whom his kingdom must fall. But the father saw that his son realized not the honors to which he was heir, in fact that he appeared entirely indifferent to the succession which would some

day devolve upon him. He noted that he daily grew restive of the duties which were calculated to fit him for his high station. More than this he openly avoided his father, and made light of the dignities which were his as the King's son.

"When the father became convinced of this he strove to learn what his son really desired. Then for the first time he became aware that his heir was really a wanderer to all intents and purposes, that his interests were entirely outside the realm where his father ruled.

"Like the wise parent that he was he now determined to give to his son the freedom that he craved. As the King desired only his son's welfare he arranged that the latter should travel abroad since that seemed best to meet his desires; as he had constantly chafed under the restraints of his father's court.

"But before letting his wayward son go out into the world the King arranged a cipher by which his son would always be able to communicate with him. This cipher was to serve him in all emergencies, and no enemy could penetrate its meaning. Thus the father and son could confer together whatever the distance between them.

"But the key to this cipher the King himself placed upon his son's person, charging him to treasure it as his most valuable possession.

"This the son promised to do, and started upon his journeyings. He traveled far and wide, and

many years rolled away and still he returned not. In fact after a time he adopted as his own the land of his wanderings, forgetting his father and home and all his former associations.

"For awhile he had failed not to make use of the cipher, particularly if in any strait of circumstances, sure that his father would understand and respond. But as time went on he adapted himself gradually to the conditions about him, and grew careless and indifferent toward his father, even neglecting the means of communicating with him until he had entirely forgotten how to make use of the key which had with so many charges been committed to his keeping.

"But even then he did not fully realize his loss, so besotted had he become through the lusts of the flesh for which he had lived. To be sure there were moments when his better nature stirred within him, and he resolved to return to his father, and be separated no more from him; moments when he remembered his princely rights and dignities.

"But even in these moments he realized that the distance between himself and his father was not merely a matter of miles, or a question of the time required to accomplish a return. He had grown entirely away from his father, and no longer recognized the filial tie between them. Sometimes, however, stirred by the remembrance of the love which had hedged him about in his youth he made a half-hearted effort to communicate with his father, but

with the result of making him more than ever sensible of the estrangement which had grown up between them.

"Consequently, he after a time gave up all such attempts, and became a complete alien from his father's house. Notwithstanding he still carried about his person the key which rightly used would have proven an open sesame to his father's heart, and to that lost converse which would have restored to him all the rights and honors of his noble birth."

Mona paused here, she would learn how much of this allegory had been understood by her companion.

"I see," said Boadicea. "God is the Father, who in the beginning gave Man, His Son, a cipher by which the latter could always communicate directly with Him; because this cipher is the key to the celestial teachings. Yes, the Son has indeed wandered in a far country and forgotten his Father, and the meaning of the starry cipher; but as you say, he still bears the key in his person; for the cipher is the zodiacal hieroglyphics, and the key has always been in Man's own body."

"Yes, the Father has thus taken care that Man shall never lose it. He has only temporarily forgotten its meaning. Some day his spiritual nature will quicken to the old interpretation. Then will he be again restored to the rights and privileges of a Son. His present estrangement cannot always continue. The Father has provided against that."

Mona's voice had a triumphant ring in it as she spoke.

"No, it cannot always continue," she added. "But the Father knew that the Son must first have the discipline of the wanderer before he would be worthy of his Son-ship."

Mona remained on this visit to her friend long enough to see the Prince Arviragus and Boadicea united in marriage. Among the Prince's gifts to his intended bride was a magnificent circlet of Roman pearls.

Boadicea had accepted this graciously rather than wound the feelings of her lover by its refusal. But she had unconsciously winced when it was clasped about her neck as a bridal adornment; with her wedding raiment she had laid the pearls aside and never afterward worn them. These were immediately replaced by the heavy chain of beaten gold which always adorned her person. This was a Keltic heirloom which she felt allied her with her Keltic forebears who had regarded gold as the sacred metal, and even more precious than gems because of its correspondential significance.

CHAPTER XVI.

Cartismandua had experienced no small satisfaction at the espousal of her only daughter with Cadallan's son, Caractacus, the young King of the Silures; for Caractacus was not at that time the avowed enemy of Rome in whose interests were bound up those also of Cartismandua.

This match between Cadallan's son and the Queen's daughter had required no intriguing to bring it about; for it had been a love affair with the contracting parties. To meet was to feel their fitness for each other, and a union quickly followed which time only strengthened. Even Boadicea had willingly yielded her idolized brother to one who had already won a sister's place in her heart.

A few years later Cartismandua saw this daughter raised to the proud position of the Queen of Scots; for her husband inherited this throne through the death of his mother's uncle, the King Metallinus. This alliance is said to have united in a double tie the royal family of North and South Britain.

Before Caractacus' accession to this throne, however, his father, Cadallan, died leaving Brigantia to

the rule of his Queen Cartismandua. This, added to the large domain which had come to her through the death of her former husband, made her one of the most powerful of British sovereigns.

It was while this Queen was in the height of her power that her youngest son was called to the throne of the Iceni because of the death of his brothers.

This rich and powerful tribe of the Iceni comprised a large part of the dominion over which his father had ruled. But notwithstanding frequent conflicts with the Roman power it had maintained its independence.

The sons of Kimbelin the Keen succeeded to the throne of the Iceni on the death of their father. Guiderius, the elder, we are told, refused to pay the tribute money to Cæsar, as his father had done before him.

This refusal provoked an attack upon the garrison of the Iceni. Guiderius and his army repulsed them with great energy, and the opposing force was nearly routed when Guiderius was slain by the craft of a Roman official.

Arviragus, seeing his brother fall, forthwith threw off his own armor and put on that of his brother, and by his courage and daring led the Britons to stand their ground. At last the Romans dividing themselves into two bodies basely quitted the field.

But Arviragus, bent upon retaliation for his

brother's death pursued his murderer, and just as Hamo reached his ship Arviragus slew him.

In the meantime Claudius did not give over his purpose but assaulted the city whither Arviragus had sought refuge. The enemy employed a variety of engines against it.

Arviragus then called his troops together and threw open the gates to march out and give him battle. But just as he was ready to begin the attack Claudius, who feared the boldness of Arviragus and the bravery of the Britons, sent a message to him with a proposal of peace. This Arviragus was fain to accept because of the importunity of his councilors.

The vast territory of the *Iceni* had enjoyed a settled government of kings and queens long prior to Roman occupation. Such governments is the result of long accumulated wealth and influence. It could not have suddenly burst into regal power.

Arviragus with his Queen Boadicea had on assuming sway over the Iceni established themselves at Norwich, the royal city of the Iceni, where for a number of years they held rule unmolested by the allies of Rome.

Later on in his reign, however, Arviragus came inevitably into conflict with the Roman power ; for the Emperor Claudius saw fit to add the possessions of the *Iceni* to the spoils already taken in Britain, and the Roman soldiery laid siege to the royal city of the Iceni.

Though surprised by this unlooked for attack Arviragus and his warriors fought so valiantly as to at least defend it from usurpation at this time; but this was no guaranty that the British tribes could continue to hold it since they were greatly outnumbered by the Roman legions.

It was soon evident that the Emperor had determined to subjugate the country of the Iceni who had so long held out against foreign rule; for he continued to mass his troops for a more prolonged attack.

It was at this juncture of affairs that Arviragus sought a conference with his powerful enemy, who was implacable in his purpose.

He would declare an end to hostilities only on the consent of Arviragus to repudiate his Queen Boadicea, and acknowledge the Roman supremacy.

The British King knew that not only his own life but the lives of all his dear ones were at stake, as well as those of his people.

His two brothers had sacrificed their lives rather than put on the Roman yoke. It seemed policy to temporize, and this he did.

After a conference with the Queen he seemingly yielded compliance to the Emperor's demands, since only on these terms could peace be agreed upon.

During his brother's reign a force of fifty thousand men had been sent over by Rome to subdue the sons of Kimbelin; but so bravely were the Roman legions

opposed by these British princes and their subjects that the aged Emperor himself was obliged to come to the assistance of his troops who nevertheless were finally repulsed by the *Iceni*, the latter, however, suffering the loss of two of their native princes in the conflict.

Now Rome was dealing with the last surviving son of Britain's dead King; and the power behind the throne, Boadicea, the loyal British Queen and woman, was the power against which the enemy's shafts were aimed.

At this time Boadicea was in the flower of her womanhood, possessing great beauty, and a reputation for daring and strategy united with a magnetic charm of manner rarely equaled by woman. She was a princess born, nursed and bred on British soil, and for this reason the idol of her countrymen. She was also the sister of Britain's hero, *Caractacus*, which fact alone would have given her no small hold on the hearts of her people.

She was now the mother of three children, two daughters and a son, all of whom were being educated in Britain, though the flower of the British youth were now generally sent to Rome to complete their studies.

It was to her friend Mona's care that the Queen had early committed the education of her daughters, and it was doubtless largely due to this fact that royalty in old Britain so long fostered and upheld certain celebrations of the Mysteries.

When Boadicea was told of the proposition of the Emperor Claudius that she be put away by her husband, and her place filled by another, and that these were the only terms on which hostilities would be suspended, she regarded the sacrifice demanded of her as naught in comparison with the welfare of her people. Was not her husband, as well as her subjects, at the mercy of the Roman tyrant?

Her reply was—"Rome and her minions cannot divorce me from my husband since God has made us one; but I will abdicate my place as Queen. It is in keeping with the Roman policy that a Mistress should be foisted upon this throne. She who usurps my place, however, can be no wife."

It was finally at Boadicea's earnest entreaty that the King of the *Iceni* yielded to the proposed alliance, though it was understood between the royal pair that their separation was to be but a temporary one. This enforced contract, which could be no marriage would not prevent them from remaining loyal to each other, and to their people.

Neither the King nor Boadicea then realized the complications which were to arise from this concession to Rome. But if Arviragus were to refuse the proposed alliance it would bring upon himself the anger of the Roman potentate, for it was the Emperor Claudius's own daughter who was offered him as a bride.

"*Gwenissa* the Fair," was to be brought to Britain, and with great pomp and acclaim be wedded to the

King of the *Iceni*, who retained his kingdom only on these terms.

Before these nuptials could be celebrated, however, Arviragus was forced to declare his marriage with Boadicea invalid.

Meanwhile the Queen and her children were confined in the capital of her own dominion. To add to Boadicea's trials at this time her little son, the youngest of her children, sickened and died.

But in the interim these proceedings against Boadicea were deeply resented by the Britons. The story of her wrongs roused every heart in the kingdom; and her loyal subjects placing themselves under arms forcibly carried off the Queen and her children from their prison, conveying them into Wales to the protection of her brother Caractacus.

The indignation of this great Chief and warrior now roused against the Romans was destined to be felt by them for many a year.

No one who had seen Boadicea in these days at *Caer Caradoc*, her brother's fortress in Wales, would have recognized the happy wife and mother of a few months before. Though surrounded by friends she pined for the prison from which her loyal Britons had released her. There, she could have occasionally communicated with her husband; here she could not hope to do so.

The following summer brought to Britain the Roman princess who was formally united to the King of the *Iceni*, her august father being present at the

nuptials. The fact that the Emperor Claudius was so ready to give his daughter in marriage to Arviragus of itself confutes the statement that the Britons were semi-barbarians at this time.

As if no measures were neglected to insult the discarded Queen, Boadicea, it was determined in council that her children should be excluded from the succession, and that the regal power should descend to the offspring of the Roman wife.

When this decision of the council reached the ears of the King, it overwhelmed him as had no previous stroke of adverse fortune. He was as one stunned under the blow, seeing no way out of the dilemma. In heart he had never repudiated Boadicea, and his children were doubly dear because they were hers.

In this extremity he received the following letter from his former friend and mentor. Mona wrote—

"I conjure thee to stand by thine ensign, the lion-hearted Hercules, and all true Britons will stand by thee. Refuse to allow thy children the stigma of being base-born. Strike not such a blow at the faithful heart of the mother who bore them. Remember that the blood that flows in their veins is of the old strain, and through a pure alliance. Foist not an alien upon thy people. Resist, and, if needful, meet the foe in the war-stain and armor of the true Briton. The lion-heart be ever thine. MONA."

That same evening as the Emperor Claudius was retiring for the night there was flung into his open window a man's gauntlet which fell at his feet.

A proceeding so peculiar arrested the Emperor's

attention, and he picked up the glove in a gingerly manner by one of the fingers when a paper dropped from it on which was inscribed the following—

"I refuse to subscribe to any measure which shall place the bar sinister upon my living children, excluding them from the throne of their ancestors. Rather would I, their father, lick the dust in preserving to them their rights. This I owe to Britain no less than to her who bore thm.

"ARVIRAGUS."

To this was affixed the royal seal.

"He has thrown down the gauntlet with a vengeance. We shall see if the 'Roman Eagles' are to be defied in securing to my grandchildren the throne of the *Iceni*," the Emperor muttered as he tore the paper into bits with a ferociousness of aspect before which his attendant quailed.

Not only did the King at once call to his aid his loyal Britons, but Boadicea's subjects as well would not suffer that such an indignity be put upon her and her children. They immediately rallied about their Queen to avenge the insult. And under the leadership of her brother Caractacus, a war was waged upon the Roman colony which effectually put a stop to the proposed measure.

Later, when, worsted in the struggle, the Roman officials desired to make terms with Caractacus, he haughtily advised them to quit the island of Britain unless they were prepared for perpetual conflict.

Not until matters had quieted down somewhat in Britain did the Emperor Claudius return to Rome

after having married his daughter to the King of the *Iceni*.

Arviragus was then left to the sovereignty of his own realm, if so it could be called, with a military rule over him in which he was compelled to acquiesce.

History tells us that for a time the King kept faith with Rome after having espoused *Gwenissa*, and that he even united with *Plautius*, the Roman general, to chastise the Britons for the abduction of Boadicea. We can imagine the reluctance with which he would have assumed such an undertaking, and we can sympathize with him in the secret exultation which he must have felt over its failure; for the Britons came off victorious in this war also.

So convinced was *Plautius* now of their resentment at the dethronement of their Queen that this general sent to Rome for two more legions to support his authority.

It was during the feastings and rejoicings at the court attendant upon the King's espousal of his Roman consort that an incident occurred which has signally marked the reign of Arviragus, and which has brought his name with honor down the ages.

This so-termed incident seems not to have been understood by historians. We refer to the arrival in Britain of Joseph of Arimathea, and the twelve who accompanied him on this embassy, which is traditionally accredited with having brought the "Holy Grail" to Britain.

We are told in history that the royal protection was granted them, and that they were hospitably entertained by the King Arviragus, who to compensate them for their long and toilsome journey bestowed on them a place of habitation.

On a small, untilled island a piece of land was apportioned the twelve, comprising altogether a territory which is to this day denominated, "The Twelve Hides of Glaston."

This Order headed by a "Knight of the Grail," Joseph of Arimathea, is supposed to have brought Christianity into Britain. That this little band did bring the Externals of religion which obtain to-day, and which finally supplanted the Internals of the old faith, there can be no question.

This was in keeping with the spirit of the age. Rome had foisted upon the people a Mistress-Queen, as Boadicea had said. Naturally did the ancient ceremonials give place to a more material form of worship. This was inevitable, for the spirit of the old faith had fled; since, as a great Seer has said, "Man fouls every house that he enters in."

Writers upon the subject to-day avow that the observance of Christian rites was early instituted in Britain where the Roman eagles had never penetrated. Evidences of the ancient observances being early incorporated into Christian worship have confounded and confused ecclesiastical inquiry for the last five centuries.

No one will now affirm that the Emperor Claud-

ius, or his successor *Vespasian* established Christianity in Britain. In fact, the earliest Christian missionaries found Druidism flourishing at the courts of the British and Irish kings.

This island was always Christian, but the *internals* of religion, styled Druidism, gave place to the *externals* during the period of the Roman occupation, which was in the age of the *Feet.*

When Joseph of Arimathea made his advent in Britain with the knights of his order, the King Arviragus (or Prastagus as he was generally styled after his Roman alliance) wrote the following letter to his former friend and mentor—

"To Mona the Druidess.

"Thou must know, most gracious lady, that the 'Sangreal' has been brought into Britain by a foreign order of priests. Its envoys taking us all to be heathen (and little wonder) would make converts to the true faith. I have examined their leader, whose blazonry it is true is the starry 'Chalice' but I fail to find that he understands anything of the interior teachings of the 'Grail.'

"He claims to have the *relic*, as he would tell you, 'the *true Chalice*'; but the order is altogether in the externals. While asserting the supremacy and mystic power of the *Sangreal* to heal all human woes, and confer upon man divine wisdom, it is to the *relic* that this power is ascribed.

"But since nothing transpires in our world of phenomena without spiritual cause I expect this order has a work to do here in Britain, even if it is only to hold the *letter* of the old teaching before the people.

"Consequently I have settled the twelve priests comprising the order, on the small island of Glaston, giving them

a hide of land apiece that they may be independent of the alms of the people. Let me know thy mind in this matter;

"ARVIRAGUS, KING OF THE BRITONS."

To this letter from the King, her former pupil, Mona replied.

"Arviragus, by the grace of God King of the Britons. I can but commend thine action. The order of which thou speakest has doubtless, as thou sayest, a work to do here in the 'land of the Cup.' We may well mourn to see the *externals* of our ancient faith so completely obscuring its *internals*, but this is to be expected; for it is the age of the Feet, else the holiest mysteries would be profaned." We whose privilege it is to guard the *Grail*-teachings, are ready if needful, to do so with our lives. This we shall consider no sacrifice, and the time is near when the human holacaust will be offered up. Our blood will be the seal laid upon our ancient institution and its mysteries.

"This, as you know, is the age of the *Feet*, for the sign of the "Fishes" is on the ecliptic. Man's gaze is directed earthward. He would make sure of his footing here, hence his thoughts are not penetrating the starry highways.

"As regards thyself, I pray daily for thee, my brother, that God will give thee that Herculean strength which thy next inevitable labor will require. That he will aid thee to throw off the yoke that Rome hath imposed upon thy neck. That thou wilt be again united to thy true wife, I fully believe. Then wilt thou have proven thyself Hercules, the Hero, the Conqueror.

"One more word and I am done. The Enemy is preparing to strike a blow at our Hierarchy. Rome is learning that the strength of the Britons lies in the idealization of their faith, which is fed and fostered by their priests until our armies meet death as they would the victor's crown, because recognizing it as the same.

Ever thy friend, MONA."

The small wattled chapel which Joseph of Arimathea and his twelve disciples built and dedicated at Glastonbury as the sanctuary of the Holy Grail, not without significance grew in time into one of the grandest cathedrals of ancient or modern days. On the site of this humble structure was finally reared that glorious Abbey which was so long the pride and admiration of the nation.

But let us remember that it was the so-styled, heathen King Arviragus who made this earliest grant of land to the church whose great revenues were later augmented by the gift of kings. The wattled chapel had grown into a magnificent edifice.

"Here in the island valley of Avalon flourished for ten centuries the one church of the first rank in England, which stood as a memorial of British days; the only one that had lived unscathed through the storm of English conquest, and which received equal reverence from the conquerors and the conquered.

Glastonbury even in its ruined state still keeps a charm which does not belong to Canterbury or the royal Abbey at Westminster."

CHAPTER XVII.

For more than a decade of years Mona had been a high-priestess in the temple, storing the celestial teaching in the minds of her pupils to such good effect that the centuries which followed were unable to eradicate it from the literature of the people, where they had striven to conceal it in folk-lore and legend.

In whatever land the Kelt might be found, anything of a mystical character fired his blood to an enthusiasm which the Norman and Saxon found impossible to understand.

With Mona, however, the years had failed to leave their impress on the lily-like fairness of her skin, or to mar the rounded contour of her form. Hers was the grace of figure, and the brilliancy of complexion which marked the ancient Keltic race, whose women had that transparency of skin through which the light of the spirit seemed to shine.

During the troublous times of which we have written she had been sent on an embassy to the island of Mona (now Anglesey) where was the stronghold of the Druidical institution. Toward this point Rome was now turning her eye as the source whence

sprang that enthusiasm for liberty, and the insubordination to foreign rule which distinguished the Britons.

Here Mona had met the most learned philosophers of her own, or of any other age; for they were Nature's priests, understanding her abstrusest sciences. They taught obscurely and enigmatically their points of philosophy in the fastnesses of mountain glens, or the deepest sylvan retreats.

Something of their method we shall attempt to show, well knowing that the ordinary reader will not care to follow us in these arcane paths. The very term, *Mystery*, has to the ordinary mind a savor of the black art. But the profoundest teachings of our faith deal with these same obscure truths.

The Druids are accredited with having penetrated the sublimest mysteries, as well as the most abstruse sciences, and all this without the aid of letters or experiments. Their religion and their metaphysics were founded on a thorough grasp of physical facts.

Mona had long desired to be more conversant with the Druidical teachings regarding the Oak, the sacred tree from time immemorial. Under the oak of *Mamre* Abraham built His altar unto the Lord.

The Druidical groves were always composed of those trees whose branches so closely entertwined that the rays of the sun could not penetrate them. In other words, "It was the Overshadowed place;" a spot which bird and beast avoided, nor could they be induced to enter one of these sacred groves.

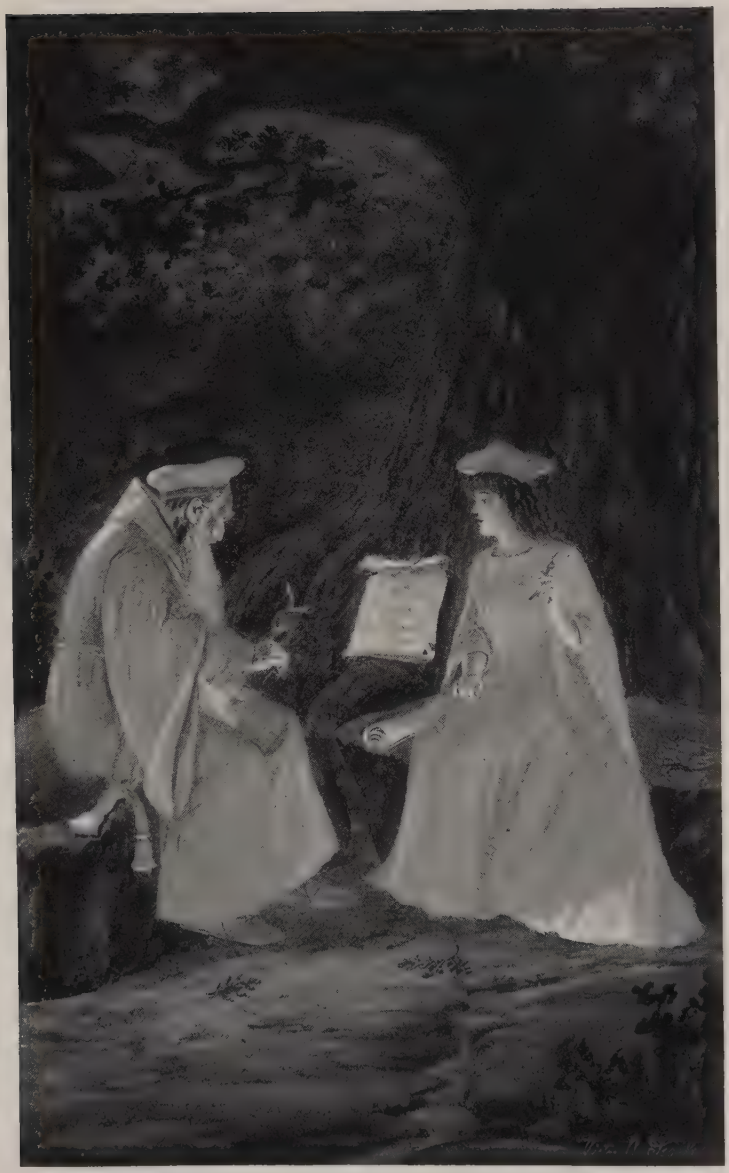
"The Vale of Worship" in Glamorganshire, Wales, has its mammoth oaks still standing; and their branches yet shade a decayed cromlech of huge proportions.

It was in one of these magnificent growths of Oak that Mona received the teaching which links all who understand the same more closely to that spiritual realm which the natural world correspondingly reveals.

She was here shown why the oak was termed the heart-tree, and wherein it corresponds with that function in the human breast. And why both are in accord with the principle symbolized in the starry "Lion." Also, why the oak was held as the primeval tree, and a type of the primeval race of man.

Physiology was no small part of the Druidical teaching, and after having been shown a drawing of the rudimentary human heart in its earliest phases, as these were carefully portrayed upon parchment, there were placed before her several shoots of the oak at different stages of growth. In the formation of their branching stalks she was told to note their correspondence with that function, the heart, which is the beginning of individual life or being.

"The younger shoot, as you see," said the old priest who was her instructor on this occasion, corresponds to the spindle-shaped valvular tissue "which is the organic center of the rudimentary heart.



THE TREE SAGE AND HIS PUPIL

"This same tissue or artery in a more advanced state assumes a sort of serpentine form, as does also the oak rootlet. In time, as you will observe from this more completely formed root, this and the valvular duct of the heart both take on a curve or deflection. Rather each bends upon itself, and then vibration in the one, and pulsation in the other begin.

"As this bending increases, two constrictions divide both the valvular tissue and the bulbous root of the oak into three compartments which open into one another. The principal one of the three is the primitive arterial trunk, and is termed the '*bulbous arteriosus*,' or bulging artery. This last in the rudimentary heart divides into two branches."

"So it does also in the *oakling*," cried Mona. "I see why the constellation of the 'Oak' is called 'the *Bulbous Arteriosus*'" she added.

"You are correct," was the old priest's reply. "The constellation of the 'Oak' is the symbol of this principle which expresses pulsation and vibration.

"From this first bending of the valvular tissue springs the heart's involuntary action. Here is the *Cam*, or center of motion." The old priest here paused to remind his pupil that to bend the body expressed humiliation or reverence, and that this was fittingly the heart's first movement.

Then resuming his explanation, he continued—"You see that here in the rudimentary oak is illustrated the formation of the cardiac muscle which is

called the heart in man, because here is the source and center of being.

"The Keltic term *Car dia*, as you know, implies the seat or throne of Deity—that ark of the covenant where Jehovah tabernacles with man.

"Hence the Oak is called the royal tree, or tree of sovereignty; because in its earliest formation it is expressive of the sovereign function of the body—that function which has dominion over all the others.

"For this reason the ancient world designated the heart by the royal symbol of the 'Lion,' which is always expressive of sovereignty.

"But to return to the oak; why is it called the celestial tree, and the only tree which has a place among the constellations? This is because of the correspondence of its fiber with the celestial principle of the heart in man, as I shall presently show.

"The essential ingredient of the blood is *fiber*, as thou knowest, and which enters into the whole composition of the body. But this is of two kinds, simple and complex. Simple fiber is the form of forms, and the enduring or celestial principle. Of this I will speak later.

"In the starry hieroglyphic of the 'Oak' we are shown the original trunk as *couped*, or cut down; but from the old stock is putting forth a vigorous, two stalked branch, the foliage of which is wholly in the 'Milky Way,' or the celestial path." Here the old priest alluded to some of the many myths

regarding this same wondrous path of the heavens. But he presently resumed his former subject. "The constellation of the 'Oak' with the '*Chameleon*' at its base furnishes very mystical teaching in this connection. In other words, man's own attitude, or point of view, makes the starry ciphers radiant with light to his understanding, or enveloped in *Cimmerian* darkness.

"The couped-Oak is significant of the renewed life which is one day to be the outgrowth of our ancient system, that primitive one which originated in the Heart-Age of the world, ere the deflection of the race came in.

"The Heart-Tree is indeed *couped*, the primitive arterial trunk; but fear not, my daughter, from its roots shall spring the new life—that vigorous branch bearing again the 'All-heal-fruit.'

"Yes, the starry 'Oak' seems to be figurative of the 'Tree' whose leaves are declared to be for the healing of the nations," was Mona's meditative reply, reverting to the ancient prophecy.

"I see," she added, "why the Druids have always been termed 'The People of the Tree.' '*Try wiis*,' or tree sages, they are indeed."

The old priest now produced another incipient oak of secondary growth. "You see," he said, "that this curve or deflection is more pronounced than in the former sprout. Here it is complete, and were this still growing the trained ear and touch could distinguish the vibration which is at this stage set up.

"Thus it is with the rudimentary heart," he continued, "when the spindling artery takes on a like deflection, pulsation begins in that organ. Dost thou see the correspondence of these deflections?" the priest suddenly asked.

"I believe that I do," Mona replied. "These deflections produce both in the heart organ and in the oak bulb an alternate action. In the former we term it pulsation, in the oakling, vibration. Here is established the circulation of the life fluid according to the capacity of its vessels."

"Thou art correct, a curve or deflection from an axle, or axis, induces alternate movement. This is called in Keltic a *cam*, signifying heart or center of action. Hence the word *cam* is a prefix to many Keltic names of places which are thereby designated as centers of life and causation.

"The deflection in the rudimentary vessel of the heart we find to be the *cam* or center of movement, the point of importance. Hence in the natural order of things our country is called *Cambria* and our principal city *Camalodunum*.

"As we have shown, the heart is the factor of all impulse and movement. Here the life stream commences and ends its circuit of the body. It is the function of entrance and exit.

"By its symbolism we are shown that the earliest, or primeval people, were the expression of that functional principle which is the source and impulse of all action. This age was the first solstice of the

race, the Cam, or point of Turning, where finally began that deflection which ushered in a more material and physical life.

"But to return to the Oak. What proof have we that the Oak had this primeval significance to man?" the priest asked.

"I know not," replied Mona thoughtfully, "unless it is that it has always been called the heart-tree. From the most remote times it has been synonymous with strength and endurance. It also figures in the most ancient myths and folk-song; does it not?"

"It does indeed," replied the old priest. "The oaken-beam is always accredited with the most enduring strength, and this because of its fiber. It is also in the myths affirmed to have the faculty of prophecy." Here the priest asked Mona if she recognized any correspondence in the oak which should account for this, and the reverence which had always been paid to it?

"Is it not the tree of the Unfolding and Overshadowing in a sense which is not common to other trees having the property of shade? It also finds its symbol in the Great Lion of the zodiac where the latter is shown to overshadow the three Northern signs. Here is expressed the supreme overshadowing principle.

"The Oak as the Overshadowing Tree portrays this fact in the mystical relation which it bears to the Vine; for the Mistletoe has no roots of its own,

but springs from the very heart of the oak which is its overshadowing parent.

"The fact that the oak bears the 'Golden Branch' * is sufficient to have made it regarded with reverence. The lesson that it teaches of the Divine Overshadowing in the human heart must have given to it the sacred character which it has always maintained in the Mysteries."

"Thou sayest truly. It is the Tree of the Overshadowing. And it stands first as an emblem of sacrifice; for it is ever yielding its life currents to the sacred *Vine* which it nourishes. So does it also offer up its heart to the uses of man.

"It is the heart-tree in the sense that the human heart is always the altar of sacrifice, where the life-blood is constantly flowing. For this reason we strew our altars with oaken leaves significant of the heart-offering which we make in emulation of the heart-tree's sacrifice."

"I have heard my brother Rold say that in the Bardic lore the Oak is addressed in the same terms as Deity. Why is this?" Mona asked.

"Because it is a symbol of the Deific principle (the Great Heart or center of all life.) In other words, Man is the true *bulbous arteriosus* through which flows the divine life current. He is that deflection from Deity where individualized action begins.

* The Mistletoe—or golden branch—was so called when plucked from the oak.

"In the bardic lore," the priest continued, "the Oak's mystical correspondences are revealed. Its very fiber, than which there is nothing more enduring, is significant of the celestial principle appertaining to man through his divine origin.

"Thou must know that *fiber* is the very constituent of the blood, and through the blood of everything in the body, even of the bones. Simple *fiber* is the immortal, imperishable element. It is that celestial principle which is the form of forms, and which gives to the blood its organizing power.

"Dost thou recognize that the simple and complex *fiber* of the blood find a correspondence in the two distinct species of the oak?" the priest asked.

"Dost thou mean in those known as the red and the white oak? It is said these never even mingle their verdure no matter how close their proximity. The foliage of the white oak is affirmed even to shrink from contact with the red. You would infer that their variation in color is in correspondence with the red and the white corpuscles of the blood which always retain this distinction in color because the former is complex, while the latter is simple *fiber?*"

"Yes, the *fiber* of the white oak is significative of the simple fiber of the blood, the enduring principle because the form of forms, while the red or complex is the perishable, reorganizing element. Hence the main, or central beam of the 'oak-tree dwelling,'

was the white oak which our Keltic forebears recognized as the sacred tree.

"Why has the gift of prophecy, of oracular power, been attributed to the Oak?" Mona asked, rememing the many traditions to this effect.

"Has not the Oak always proclaimed the fact that the offering of the heart is the great oblation required of man? The oracular principle attributed to it," the priest continued, "is in correspondence with its power of expanding and unfolding. Here again, it is symbolic of the heart from which the whole human organism is unfolded.

"The first putting forth of the oakling in its two branches is typical of the two branching arteries which the heart puts forth to feed the *brain*—that Tree whose verdure is the heart's first offering.

"From its two branching offshoots the Oak expands into the verdure-clad monarch of the forest. So also does Man because of the two branching arteries which the heart puts forth to feed the brain become the monarch of the earth, having dominion over the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, as God ordained; for the blood is the vehicle of that divine potency, the spirit.

"Hence we see that the expanding, overshadowing oak is nature's symbol of the unfolding or oracular principle." The old priest paused and sat for some time in silence, so apparently lost in thought that Mona feared the lesson was finished.

After a time looking up he abruptly asked this

question, "Why does man recognize and talk of his family-tree?"

"Perhaps for the reason that the spirit apprehends that of which the mind is not conscious. It may be that this wisdom is dormant in the brain since our forebears had this heavenly science."

"Yes, the Oak as the great family Tree of the race was universally recognized. But to day the interiors of the mind of man are generally closed. The race cannot recall the wisdom of its celestial expression.

"The primeval people were 'the people of the Oak.' This was their family-tree. Hence we make it the central beam of our dwellings because of the eternal fitness of things; for man is always building better than he knows."

"Why is it called a 'tablet or table-book,' and 'the place of inscription'?" she asked.

"Because the Oak-tree and the heart of man are Nature's register or tablet of the same celestial mystery which is very difficult to clothe in words. Were you not an initiate I should not attempt it,' was the priest's reply.

"By virtue of its constant offering up of heart the Oak is Nature's register of Love's mystery. So is the human heart Love's theater of action, where the great drama is played.

"The sign *Leo* which is the symbol of the heart, marks that point of time in the sun's cyclic-course where Love's great drama has its physical consum-

mation. In other words, then obtains Love's spiritual expression.

"*Function*, *Tree*, and starry *Sign* as well as Nature's manifestation in the *Lion*-month are all in correspondence, and shadow forth the teachings of the sacred 'Chalice or Grail,' that mystic 'Cup' which is always overflowing with the wine of life."

"I fear I do not fully see this mystery of the 'Grail' in its relation to the Oak," said Mona after some moments of reflection. How does the tree correspond to the sacred Chalice? Is it through its fruit, the acorn? I know the same is very mystical in its significance."

"Dost thou not recognize that the acorn with its overflowing Cup is typical of the heart's constant offering of the wine of life? It is that overflowing beaker which is expressed in the starry Chalice of the heart-sign Leo."

"Most certainly the Oak is the tree of the *Cup*," Mona replied. "And the 'Crescent' rising from the 'Chalice' shows this *Cup* to be also overflowing," she added.

"When you recall the mystic markings of the acorn, which are crescent-shaped in outline, I think you will see another correspondence with the *Chalice*."

"I do indeed see that it is the full-heart offering which is here shadowed forth," was her reply.

"This overflowing vessel, or plethora of life, expresses the same principle shadowed forth in the

Thoghair, or Lion-month, when the harvest comes in.

"Nature is ever enacting the great drama which finds its consummation in the winning of the *Cup*. The Grail-teachings are the most arcane of the Mysteries. The constellation of the 'Crescent in the Cup' is a hieroglyphic so mystical in its significance that few can to-day fully interpret its meaning."

CHAPTER XVIII.

While red-handed war raged in other portions of the island, the Brigantes had enjoyed immunity from this scourge.* The peculiar topographical features of this region, with its precipitate mountain passes, made it a natural fortress; while the numerous tribes possessing these districts were able to hold even a much larger tract of country. The deep valleys and shaggy forests did not offer a camping ground to the enemy.

Reports of the atrocities perpetrated by the invaders had fired the blood of these hardy mountaineers, and recruits had gone out from old Cambria to aid their brothers in the South and East.

The Roman power had ere this learned that the desperate resistance of the Britons to the inroads of Rome was strengthened and encouraged by its hierarchy. "A religious fanaticism," as the enemy termed it, roused the Britons to an enthusiasm which

* "The Brigantes as late as the eightieth year of the Christian era fought to maintain their liberty, long after their fellow-countrymen had submitted to the Roman empire."

was almost superhuman where their institutions were concerned.

While the Britons were fighting to defend their homes and their altars from desecration, the Romans were incited only by avarice, and the desire to maintain the luxury which the spoils of war afforded them.

Rome was now abandoning her original policy of exercising sway through the native British princes, but instead was imposing upon them military tribunes, as in the case of Arviragus, King of the *Iceni*.

As time went on there was a growing belief among the Brigantes that heaven was offended with the tribes which had become subject to the invader's rule. It was a tenet of their ancient faith (as of ours to day) that offended Deity is propitiated only by the shedding of blood.

The idea of sacrifice has pervaded all religions as well as that which is termed Christian. The offering up of the Son by the Father is the accepted dogma of the Christian world. While a profound truth underlies this dogma, the letter of the same has lighted many a martyr-fire.

That a *human* sacrifice should be offered by the tribes enjoying immunity from war was the general feeling of the Brigantes, and in this, even the wisest shared.

What was at first but a suggestion had soon grown into a general demand. It behoved the

Brigantes to come to the aid of their brothers in this manner, since under the rule of the usurper this ancient custom could not be observed. It was believed that the offering of a human victim would slake the thirst for blood which had overtaken the land.

This was the state of things among the Brigantes when one of their great festivals was nearly due.

"Lammas Day" was approaching. This was the Great Yule of August, which was always observed on the first day of this month.

In the Salisbury manuals "Lammas Day" is called *Benedicto norvorum fructuum.* At this time was celebrated one of the four great fires which were yearly lighted.

These quartenary celebrations occurred when the sun entered each of the four royal signs, the *Lion*, the *Scorpion*, the *Waterman*, and the starry *Bull.* This last was the great Tauric festival when bulls were offered upon the altar in commemoration of the Cosmic bull which had spoken worlds into being. The significance of these festivals we will not enter upon here, but will simply say, that their ceremonials were in correspondence with Nature's phenomena, and had to the people a spiritual meaning.

The word *Lammas* is affirmed to signify all kinds of grain, but more especially that made from the acorn, the sacred grain of the Kelts.

"Lammas Day" ushered in the "month of green corn," as August was anciently called. And what

we would here note is that this festival occurred when the acorn is completely formed in the cup, or rather when the kernel has attained its full round ; when it is swelling from its cup, and is yet green. At this period the sun attains the starry "Cup." Here the measure of the year is full, as is the acorn's cup.

The grain or mast, made from the acorn was anciently called "Oak-corn."

It was some weeks previous to *Lammas* that Mona one evening met "Carac of the Grail." Of late she rarely saw him, their paths seeming to have diverged as much as had their lives.

On this occasion he signified a desire for private speech with her on a matter of moment to himself. When would she grant him the opportunity ?

She declared her willingness to do so at once, and proposed that he come to her home that same evening, when she would give him an interview in the oak-copse where they could be alone.

Carac came at the time specified, and they repaired to the oak growth near the house as Mona had proposed. One of the conditions specified in this interview, however, was not carried out. They did not go to the coppice alone.

Mira had seen them leave the house together, and a proceeding so unusual provoked her curiosity to learn its import. She had not yet so far outgrown the old attraction that Carac's near presence failed to stir her pulses like old wine.

She would follow and learn the meaning of this interview which had evidently been prearranged between them.

The passing years had brought to Mira a gentleness of spirit, and a gravity of demeanor which her early youth had not promised. She had also increased in stature, for her physical growth, like her mental and moral, had been a late one. But she still had the buoyant health and elastic step of the mountain maiden. The rose was yet fresh upon her cheek, nor had her eyes lost the wondering look which we often see in children; while the bands of yellow hair hanging over her shoulders were as abundant as in her girlhood.

Her parents were now dead, for the old Chief had not long outlived his Prince, the great Cadallan. The two sisters dwelt together and alone in the old home, as their brother Rold had years before become the favorite minstrel at the court of Arviragus. Rold had won the royal favor by his peculiar gift for chanting in metrical form the exploits of Arthur and his Knights. It was to these veiled teachings of the old faith that the King turned for solace from his court cares.

Mira entered the oak-copse just a moment behind her sister and Carac. The moon had not yet risen, and the shadow of the grove enabled her to keep near them. To her surprise they were walking in silence.

Why had they come here if not for conversation?

She crept stealthily toward them, but in doing so she nearly betrayed her presence by stepping upon a dry twig which crackled beneath her foot.

This slight noise served to arrest the steps of Mona and her companion who stopped and looked about them. All was quiet, and they now evidently decided that they had put themselves beyond the liability to be overheard; for they did not go on.

Carac had thought he was ready for this interview, but now that he found himself near Mona he hesitated to broach the matter which he wished to lay before her. He could not now find the right words in which to introduce the subject. Hence he stood for a few moments without speaking, while his companion waited for the communication he had expressed a desire to make.

Mona saw his mental agitation, but refrained from asking any question. When he was ready he would speak. He presently did so.

"I fear, Mona, that what I have to say will meet with thy disapproval." Then without more circumlocution he added: "Thou knowest that the people call for a sacrifice, and that they should do so in times like these, is in accordance with our ancient institution.

"Sacrifice is the one prominent fact throughout the whole economy of Nature. It is the foundation stone of Creation. The weaker must ever yield to the stronger, the few to the many, and the lower orders of life to the higher."

Carac paused as if waiting for an assent from his companion, and Mona replied,—

"Yes, the sacrificial offering is a part of our worship, for the reason that Nature shows it to be essential in her great plan. In our religious ceremonials we slay the dumb beast upon our altars in recognition of the fact that the merely animal nature is to be slain in ourselves if we would make an acceptable offering to the Lord.

"As thou sayest, the people are now demanding a human sacrifice, while they make the false claim that our ancient worship sanctioned such a propitiation for sin. This is because they have lost sight of the original meaning of such an offering.

"Human sacrifice is indeed always demanded, but we are to offer our bodies a *living sacrifice.* Doth not the ancient law read—'He hath no pleasure in the blood of bulls and goats?' It is the offering of ourselves—that pledge to His service which is made in denying self. The mystic rite of sacrifice finds its true expression only on the smoking altar of the heart whose incense fires are always ascending.

"The offering of bulls and goats, or even lambs, avails not when the principles for which these stand are not reflected in the heart's offering."

"Thou are right in this matter," responded Carac. "The heart is indeed the altar of sacrifice. The blood, however, must flow freely there, or else the brain reels and health cannot prevail in the body.

So, on the other hand, the health and welfare of the Body-Social requires the sacrificial blood to flow. The sacred life-stream alone can atone for sin."

"But this has already been offered," Mona replied. "The crucifixion of the Nazarene, the Maiden's Son, is too recent for any one to forget its import. He has made the *Great Sacrifice.* Dost thou not remember that He said,—'No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself'?"

"Yes, but I do not understand how His sacrifice can avail for Britain?" replied Carac. "At least it has not stayed the Nemesis of war. Our land is flowing in blood, and the people believe that heaven demands a human atonement, a propitiatory offering. I think they are right, and I have registered a vow to answer this demand. On 'Lammas Day' I shall make an offering of my body. My life-blood shall sprinkle our ancient altar."

"No, Carac, thou shalt not do this thing. Thou mistakest the very principle of sacrifice when thou talkest of offering thy life-blood as thou wouldst the blood of rams and goats.

"Oh, why do not the people better understand the ancient ceremonials?" Mona cried, raising her hands to heaven as if in supplication. Then, as if a ray of light had pierced the labyrinth of mental darkness with which she seemed surrounded, she added,—

"I think I see why the old ceremonials are to pass out. The Maiden's Son has made that real

which was before but symbolic. 'Arthur' the Divine incarnate, has again passed from the sight of His people."

Then turning with heat to her companion, she cried,—"Who art thou, Carac, that thy blood should appease the gods?"

"Is it naught that I wear the human form divine, that I am in the likeness and image of God? Does not self-sacrifice belong to the highest order of hero?" Carac asked.

"Yes, in the way of loving service to thy fellow-man. But when thou dost offer thyself as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of a nation, thou dost put thyself on an equality with the immortal gods, and this to me seemeth sacrilegious."

"Doth not my starry blazonry ordain me to such a sacrifice? In some way my life should be offered for the people. It is meet and proper to me as a 'Knight of the Chalice.' I am entitled to a share in the 'Cup' with Him who bade His disciples drink of it in remembrance of His Sacrifice.

"To the Heart-people belongs peculiarly the bitter draught, which even He could not put away; but which he quaffed to the dregs. If love for my fellowman prompts me to empty the vessel of the wine of life upon God's altar, who shall say me nay, or deny that mine is a service to humanity?"

"I deny it," cried Mona, "since thou art not called to any such sacrifice. By what right wouldst thou put out the life which God has given thee?

Thou wouldst not maim thy body, or make any part of it unserviceable to the rest; and since thou art a part of the body-universal thou hast no such right over thy life."

"No, I would not maim my body, but I would offer the life God has given me as an atonement for my country's sin, as men offer their lives in battle. Thou knowest the old proverb—'He that would be chief let him be a bridge.'

"Like my ancestor, 'Bran the Blessed,' I would throw my body across the chasm that the hosts may pass over in safety."

"If thy body could suffice to close the chasm, then well and good would be thine offering. But when thou hadst done this thing the chasm would still yawn and the hosts, in crossing the bridge which thy love had sought to span, would find it all insufficient to bear the ammunition of war. So thy offering would be in vain."

Long and earnestly did Mona reason against the infatuation which had taken possession of Carac, but without dissuading him from his purpose. That his proposed sacrifice would be met with acclaim, and accepted under the existing condition of public feeling, Mona felt she had too much reason to fear.

The people were clamorous for the trial to be made, believing that reprieve for their land could come through no other source.

Mona turned homeward from this interview with the feeling of having failed at a crisis of her life.

Why had she not been able to show Carac the utter futility of what he proposed; that such an offering would be a complete perversion of the ancient idea of sacrifice.

That nothing would be gained by further effort on her part his last words had proven; for she had finally urged upon him consideration for his father and sister, as well as the closer ties which Nature offered him through wife and children.

This had seemed to rouse in him a spirit which she would not have willingly provoked. "Wherein is the sacrifice which I would make different from thine own? Art thou not giving all the years of thy sweet womanhood (in other words, of thy life) to the service of Mylitta? Didst thou consider those nearer ties of Nature when thou madest thine offering? One cannot give more than one's life, and thou hast done that."

Mira had been near enough to overhear all that was said during this interview. She knew that Mona had done her utmost to dissuade Carac from his purpose. Appeals to him were in vain, since Mona had failed. Mira's resolve was now taken, she would act. He should not do this thing.

But she must act without either Mona's or Carac's knowledge, and at once, as "Lammas Day" was near; and it would take time to carry out her purpose.

Gladly now would she have confessed her eaves-

dropping to Mona, but this she might not do. She must keep her own secret as well as theirs. To herself she excused her act with the plea that heaven must have ordained her to be a witness of that interview which disclosed to her knowledge a plot, which, perhaps she alone had the power to circumvent.

CHAPTER XIX.

Far up on the mountains, remote from his kind, lived a hermit priest in the odor of sanctity. This man was celebrated for his knowledge of, and his devotion to, the mysteries of Druidism. In other words, he was a *Helio-Arkite* priest. The only occasions on which he came among men was at the celebration of the rites of *Ceridwen.*

To him, Mira resolved to go, for he was a recognized authority, and hence would have the power to prevent Carac's intended sacrifice. She would prevail upon Father *Pasgadwr* to interfere in the matter; for, if, as Mona said, such an offering would be a perversion of their ancient rites, the good priest would not allow it. For him to forbid it would be all sufficient, since what he bound was *bound*, and what he loosed was *loosed* in the eyes of the people.

No one knew Father *Pasgadwr's* age, but that he was very old, far beyond the usual span of life, was generally recognized. There were traditions of his having been for a long period an inhabitant of that famous center of wisdom, "Emrys," the Ambrosial

city of Mt. Snowdon. Once, when questioned on this matter, he had replied:

"One need not seek Mt. Snowdon's heights to find the 'Ambrosial City,' since the same lieth in the altitudes of the spirit."

The name of the good priest, "Father *Pasgadwr*," signified "The Generous Feeder," he who giveth liberally of his sustenance. The people saw in this venerable man the patriarch "Joseph"; for, like the latter, he nourished his brethren, being himself filled with the spirit. The virtues of a Joseph were also attributed to this old priest. It was believed that his *separateness* of life had enabled him to hold the truth chastely which was the source of his power; for in a time of spiritual famine there was always corn in his granary. Those who sought of him in any spiritual need went not away empty.

Mira did not ask herself how she was to carry out her purpose of seeking the old priest, though she was aware that its accomplishment was likely to be attended with danger. Nor did she dare communicate her intention to any one lest she be hindered in the enterprise.

But her resolve to go to the good Father strengthened from day to day, the more she thought about the matter. She could see no other way than to go herself, though there were moments in which her spirit quailed before the contemplated ordeal.

She would have to be very circumspect in arranging for her absence from home, and allow herself

no more time than would be absolutely necessary, since she did not wish to be missed by her neighbors, or to call their attention to her movements.

She must leave a message for Mona stating that she would be away from home a few days, so that her sister need feel no anxiety at her absence. She did not say that she was going to a neighboring hamlet on one of the household excursions, which were not unusual with her; but she left Mona to infer that she had done so.

Mona wondered that her sister should have taken this time when the great festival was so near, but supposing that Mira's errand had something to do with the bravery of attire in which she was wont to array herself, felt no concern at her absence.

Poor Mira, however, had given little thought to her personal adornment for the festival. She would avert a tragedy, and this for the time occupied her mind to the exclusion of all other interests.

While Mira well knew the location of the particular spur of the mountain where the old priest had his abode, she had forgotten how often this, and neighboring peaks, of the Cumberland-range, were enveloped in "*Llengél*," a concealing veil of mist. The fact that a complete wall of the same hung frequently about this spur made it a point of mysterious attraction toward which the women and maidens living in the valley below gazed with a sort of awe when it emerged into view. To these simple-minded folk it seemed that the hermit-priest

and his abode were hidden by God from the eye of man.

Mira unfortunately had no knowledge of the most direct way to reach the spur she sought. It did not occur to her that a trodden path connected this retreat with the hamlet below, in such seclusion did the old priest live.

So she had started upon her ascent of the mountain from that part of the valley where this spur came fully into view. Believing that by keeping always in mind the position of certain landmarks she could not lose her way, Mira started upon the journey which might well have put to task a hardy mountaineer because of the route she had taken.

To her dismay she soon found that her way lay over sharp crags and through thick underbrush; for she purposely avoided the more wooded parts of the mountain, fearing to be attacked by some wild beast. She early discovered in her ascent that her constantly changing point of view made it necessary for her to keep a sharp lookout for the "Hermit's Crag" else she would have no certainty that she was going in the right direction.

The circuitous route which she was obliged to take made the distance much greater than she had counted upon, and after two weary days of climbing, on her part, the desired peak was still in the distance.

Not wishing to be cumbered with any superfluous weight Mira had started with what proved a scanty

provision for such an enterprise. She had taken the precaution to provide herself with a small drinking horn, and a few tiny bean-like lumps of the concentrated food of the Brigantes. Upon a morsel of this food their soldiers are said to have subsisted for days, this supplying the need of drink as well as food. But for this provision Mira would have suffered much from thirst, as springs were rarely to be met with on the mountain at that season. Only once had she come upon a purling stream. Then she had slaked her thirst with a copious draught, and filled the drinking horn suspended from her waist.

It was the third day, when, weary and footsore she reached a point from which she could plainly see the "Hermit's Hut." Oh, if the good Father should not be there! At this thought Mira's heart seemed suddenly to become lead in her bosom. What would she do in case he were absent?

The previous day the peak had been concealed for several hours, and she had been obliged to stay her steps reluctantly, though she had sadly needed the rest. But even this had not disheartened her as did now the fear that she would find the hut empty.

If she could only shout loudly enough for him to hear he would come to her. She would try, and, gathering herself up, she essayed a prolonged cry of "Oh!" but her throat gave forth only a faint sound, scarcely waking the echoes of the mountain.

Since the previous day she had been without food, her supply having given out; for she had been able

to obtain but a small amount, and had not counted upon being so long on the way.

As her voice had failed her, she realized that she had no strength to waste in useless effort, and again she pressed on, determined to reach the hut before nightfall, which was near.

The shadows were making everything obscure when she gained the little clearing where stood the dwelling of the hermit-priest. Suddenly her limbs refused to carry her further, and with a sort of wail she fell to the ground while a dizziness and darkness stole over her. She had fainted from weariness and lack of food.

When Mira returned to consciousness, she was lying in what seemed to her a wood-bower; for trees were all about her, a low growth whose leaves she could almost touch. The next moment bending solicitously over her was the grave but illumined face, which she had seen once before in her life, and then by chance; but which she had never forgotten, so impressed was she with its majesty and sweetness.

Now she held her breath with a sort of awe, scarce daring to speak with that face so near her own.

Seeing that she had returned to a startled consciousness of her surroundings, the old priest said reassuringly—

"My child, thou wert spent with fatigue, and fasting, so that thou didst faint at my door, but the cordial hath revived thee. Now, thou hadst better

swallow more," saying which he put to her lips the small drinking cup which he held in his hand.

"Didst thou come up the mountain purposely to see me?" he presently asked, when she had taken the aromatic mixture as he desired.

Mira nodded acquiescence. She wished he would continue to talk to her, and not look for her to answer; such a charm there was to her in his voice. But she must respond, since he was waiting for her to explain why she had sought him.

"I am so glad I did find thee at home," she said faintly. "I very much feared thou wouldst be away, and then my striving would all have been in vain." Here Mira sighed deeply, remembering the fatigue she had endured to reach this spot, and the gravity of the mission she had undertaken.

"Naught is in vain," returned the kindly old man bending over her. "Thine effort would have counted for something e'en though it had seemingly failed." But seeing that she was suffering from bodily exhaustion, as tears had given place to her momentary excitement, he bade her wait until morning before telling him the object of her visit.

At this the old priest left her, but he returned in a few moments with a porringer which was evidently just from the fire. Mira had never eaten such porridge as was now fed to her from the old priest's hand. It seemed to her the very elixir of life so completely did it satisfy all nature's cravings.

When she had finished, she declared herself so

refreshed as to be able to state her errand; but this the old priest would not allow, she must sleep first. In the morning she should tell him why she had come up the mountain.

And sleep she did upon her couch of leafy boughs as sweetly as ever mortal slept upon a bed of down. She woke, however, to the realization of her aching limbs and wounded hands, for she had been obliged constantly to use the latter in fighting back the stiff under-brush.

Though Mira was now able to tell her story she was in no condition to return home immediately; and it wanted but three days to "Lammas." She presently, however, lost sight of her bodily discomfort in distress of mind lest, after all, she fail to save Carac.

Mira told her errand with a pathos that deeply moved her listener, revealing her own heart in the telling. She had not the art to veil the great love which she still bore "Carac of the Grail."

So much time had been consumed in coming up the mountain that now she would not be able to return because of her crippled condition before the "Lammas" celebration. This troubled her more than the bruises and lacerations she was obliged to nurse.

The old priest heard her story without comment, but at its conclusion he said:

"Make thyself content, my daughter, such a sacrifice as thou fearest will not be offered."

"But who will prevent it?" cried Mira, "the people believe that the gods demand it, that otherwise they will not be appeased."

"I will be the instrument in God's hands to prevent it," replied the priest; "for to-morrow I will go down the mountain, and see that thy friend does not carry out his mad purpose. The people must not be allowed to so turn about and pervert the ancient mysteries. They are but holding to the empty form out of which the spirit has fled."

"I knew, Father, that if thou didst but interfere the people would not dare go against thee," said Mira, her face alight with satisfaction. "But they believe the gods are very angry. Please tell me who are the gods, and why they are angry?"

"The gods, my child, are those spiritual Intelligences that always surround us as mediums of the Divine life which is ever flowing to man," was the reply of the old priest, who added—"In the ancient Word we are commanded to revere these Intelligences. 'Thou shalt not revile the gods,' is one of the primeval commands."

"And are they angry and revengeful when man does not recognize and revere them?" asked Mira.

"They are doubtless grieved away for a time when man puts himself in antagonism to this divine inflowing, but they do not force anything upon him."

"Then why do the people think they are angry now?" asked Mira.

"The people have so far turned away from the

monitions of these spiritual messengers, that they are no longer conscious of the divine-inflowing. Hence they believe these higher Intelligences are angry."

"Then, instead of spilling human blood, the people should confess their wrong-doing, and perhaps the gods would again smile upon our land, and dwell among us as in the 'Golden Age," said Mira thoughtfully.

"Thou art right, my child. The gods cannot dwell among men unless the conditions prevail which enable them to do so. Then it is indeed the 'Golden Age.'"

"Will that happy time ever come again?" Mira had hesitated to ask this question, fearing to weary the kind old man.

"The 'Golden Age' will return when man makes the right conditions; not until then," replied the priest.

After this Mira lay quietly thinking. She had made several efforts to rise, but weakness overcame her in each attempt; and she had resigned herself to the inevitable. She must lie still until her strength returned, but the knowledge that the next morning the good priest would go down the mountain and forbid Carac to carry out his purpose made her content. Such faith did she have in Father *Pasgadwr's* ability to do what he promised that she never for a moment questioned the result.

Would Carac be angry with her for thus interfer-

ing? That he might be had not before occurred to Mira. Well, it would be very hard to have him feel unfriendly to her, but she could bear this even if thereby she saved his life.

The following morning Mira found herself able to rise, but she was not yet equal to any exertion. So after the good Father started on his descent of the mountain she returned to her leafy bower, and in a refreshing sleep Nature soon made her oblivious to her surroundings; for she did not awake again until the dawn of the following day.

Though rested and refreshed in body, the lacerated condition of her feet would not have allowed her descending the mountain unaided, even had she not given her word to the good Father that she would not attempt it.

He had promised to send her assistance, and evidently she would be obliged to wait for this. To brave again the discomforts she had experienced in the ascent was out of the question. But Mira little dreamed how the promise of the good priest would be carried out.

The morning of "Lammas Day" dawned fair and bright, dispelling the mists about the mountain. So shut in had Mira been the previous day that she could compare it to nothing but a white tent dropped down about her. She remembered that this canopy of mist often enclosed the "Hermit's Peak," and it seemed a fitting abode for him who lived apart from men, and with the holy things of God.

Mira, however, was glad to be able again to look down into the valleys where she knew that the people, even at that early hour, were in holiday attire, and meeting in little squads preparatory to joining the throng which would gather for the day's rites. Many of them must be already on the spot where the great "Lammas-fire" would be kindled. Mira could in fancy see the horns of plenty which would be filled with the grains yet green, and offered as a sacrifice at this feast.

As the rising sun lighted up the valleys, she strove to catch a glimpse of the distant scene, to learn the particular stage of the proceedings. She could see that there was movement, but no murmur of the life throbbing and surging below, reached her ears.

As for the "Lammas-fire" she now realized that she would not be able to catch even its gleam, as it would be kindled on a height out of range of the "Hermit's Peak."

Since she could not see or participate in what was going on in the hamlets below her, Mira turned her attention to decorating with oak-chaplets the interior of the rude hut where the old priest had his abode.

She was still engaged in this labor of love when she heard shouting in the near distance. Several voices at least were calling out something. Who could be coming up the mountain with such a clamor as to waken all its echoes?"

Mira decided at once not to discover herself to them, lest it be some lawless band of marauders who knew of the old priest's absence, and sought this opportunity to pillage his stores.

Looking cautiously out from her hiding-place, Mira presently saw the figures of four men who seemed to be carrying something on their shoulders.

They had stopped shouting but were steadily progressing up the mountain. From her covert Mira watched them until they came fully into view. Then a pleased exclamation broke from her lips. Why, she knew them all. They were from her own hamlet. But what were they going to do on the mountain? A moment afterward her query was answered.

"Mira, where art thou hiding thyself? We want thee;" were the calls of the four stalwart clansmen whom she had known from childhood.

What could it mean? They were surely calling *her?* She would show herself and learn what they wanted. As they entered the small clearing, she came out of her leafy hiding-place, and at once—"Bravo little Mira!" greeted her appearance.

It took but a moment for her to learn that it was as Carac's preserver she was thus hailed; and that these four sturdy clansmen were to be her escort down the mountain. She was wanted at the feast down yonder whence they had come. Remonstrance on her part was useless; the people were clamorous

to do her honor for the heroic action she had taken in behalf of "Carac of the Grail."

Mira's friends had brought up with them as a means of conveyance a sort of net, or hammock, made of rushes, such as hunters used in bagging game. This, however, was stretched upon poles, and in this Mira could lie at her ease while borne along upon the shoulders of her carriers.

Finding that protest was useless, since they had orders to bring her without fail, Mira began making her preparations for the descent. But in the meantime her friends had discovered the oak-chaplets which she had been weaving, and with these they at once decorated the poles of her improvised barrow.

Mira never forgot that progress down the mountain which a few days before she had toiled up so painfully. Nor did she soon forget the welcome which greeted her when she was borne into the midst of the circle gathered about the "Lammas Feast."

Every one now was ready to accord the brave girl praise for standing so staunchly between Carac and his contemplated sacrifice. But for the timely interposition of Father *Pasgadwr*, "Carac of the Grail" would not at that moment been living.

Even the good priest had not been able to avert the carrying out of a rite which the people believed to be demanded, and to be sanctioned by their ancient institution.

A human sacrifice they felt was called for by the

exigency of the time. Blood should flow upon that altar where had been offered the grains of Nature's bounty. She had given unstintingly of the life of her bosom, and man should emulate her sacrifice. The sacred wine, or human life-stream, should bedew Nature's offering.

As we have said, the people clamored for a human sacrifice, and one had been offered before Mira made her appearance upon the scene. Old Moll's son had been the victim,—thus had "Roving Tom" expiated his crimes in the eyes of the people.

CHAPTER XX.

The evening following "Lammas" Mira was sitting thoughtfully in the firelight, and alone, her sister having stepped out to a neighbor's, when a rap at the door startled her from her reverie.

In accordance with the hospitable custom of that region she bade whoever it might be come in, and "Carac of the Grail" entered. For a moment confusion robbed Mira of even common courtesy. On seeing who her visitor was she had risen, but she made no advance to meet him, while her lips refused to utter any word of welcome. Instead she had turned as one dazed toward the fire, remaining silent.

Undeterred, however, at this reception, Carac crossed the room to the fireplace where Mira was standing shading her eyes as if the light hurt them. For a moment he regarded her also in silence, then taking both her hands in his own he said gently,—

"Wilt thou not look at me, Mira dear?" for her eyes still avoided his. "Thou wert minded to do me a great kindness yestere'en. Then I was in no mood to thank thee, now I would do so. Hast thou not even a word to give me to day, little Mira?"

"'Carac of the Grail' is so rich in friends he needeth not to count 'little Mira' among them," she said, meeting his eyes while tears were filling her own. Bravely winking them back, however, she added. "Thou hast no call to thank me, Carac, I could not have done other than I did." She now stood confronting her visitor with an easy grace and dignity of manner which was a revelation to the man, who had always regarded her as weak, though winsome; and a slave to her emotional nature.

"Say not so, Mira, I feel that I do have cause to thank thee most heartily for the service thou didst do me; for our good Father hath shown me the folly of such a purpose as mine when our land is already reeking with blood.

"And now since I owe my life to thee, I have determined to ask thee to share it. Come to me as my wife, Mira, and I promise to be to thee all that a husband should."

With a sudden gesture of protest Mira released her hands from Carac's clasp, putting him away from her as she said with gentle firmness:

"Thy wife I cannot be. Thou art beside thyself to ask such a thing, and thou wouldst not if the frenzy of self-sacrifice were not still upon thee."

For a moment Carac stood as one who had received an entirely unexpected rebuff. But something in Mira's words had arrested him. Was she right? Had he been yielding to an emotional frenzy prompted by gratitude for his deliverance? There

was no mistaking Mira's meaning at least. She would not for a moment consider his proposal. Without making any reply Carac turned and walked out of the house.

A few moments afterward Mona entered. She had seen Carac leave the house, and he had passed her on the road as one in a daze, taking no note of anything about him.

"Thou hadst a visitor in my absence?" Mona said, a note of inquiry in her voice. They were not wont to have evening callers in these days.

"Yes, 'Carac of the Grail' stepped in to speak a word of grace for what he was pleased to term my service to him." Mira said indifferently.

"So I should think he might," returned Mona regarding her sister attentively.

"But I told him that thanks were needless from him to me. I could not have done other than I did." Mira's manner effectually misled her sister as to the real import of Carac's visit.

"Since his father's death he is greatly changed," Mona resumed. "He now seems entirely unable to settle to his old scientific pursuits. It is a pity he does not marry. With wife and children about him his life would take on a healthier tone.

"He grows graver and more preoccupied in his bearing every year. He appears to feel himself, in a way, personally responsible for these disquieting times. I confess I am somewhat concerned as to what will be the outcome of the struggle through

which he is passing." Mona had spoken with so much solicitude in her tone that Mira found herself wondering if her sister did not feel that she was herself in some measure responsible for the change which had come over Carac.

But Mona continued. "He says that he ought before this to have taken up arms against the enemies of our land. If he is the lion his place is in the arena." Mona did not see the sudden flushing and paling of her sister's face as she spoke. This was a danger of which Mira had not thought. So completely had Carac been associated in her mind with his books that it had not occurred to her he might bear arms in the warfare then raging.

"I am told," resumed Mona, "that he intends joining his clansmen in the South defending their ancestral fortress, '*Dinas-Bran*' (the castle of the Raven.) It is natural that his thoughts should turn in this direction; for if there is one spot in this land which should be sacred from Roman invasion it is the valley of *Llangollen*. The vale that has from time immemorial been consecrated to the Mysteries." Here Mona lapsed into silence, gazing absently into the firelight, while her thoughts had evidently wandered far away.

"Tell me about the vale of *Llangollen*, sister. I have heard thee speak of it before; but I did not then realize that Carac's ancestral home was there,"

Mira's question recalled her sister's wandering thoughts." The vale is the very heart of Britain

where flows the sacred *Dee;* and the famous 'Pass' has been guarded for centuries by the ancient fortress of the 'Raven.' Where the 'Pass' closes Nature has carved in the solid rock the figure of the '*Virgin* and Child,' and here they will endure while rivers run and stars their courses keep."

"Why do they call it a 'Pass' if it is closed as thou sayest?" asked Mira who desired to keep her sister to this theme.

"Because it is a majestic *Pass* between the most wonderful wall of rock on both sides for many miles. It closes where the mountains come together at the 'Virgin's Rock.' Here the cliffs meet, and man can go no farther. It has always been called the 'World's End,' and fittingly so, for meanings remain in names long after the reason for the same is forgotten.

"'The Crag of Arthur and Our Lady' guards this impassable way. But not until you have penetrated this 'Pass' (to its limits) do you perceive the majestic figure of the 'Virgin' standing out from the massive cliff, and presenting the 'Child' at arms' length. Here is teaching, however, that only the Initiate in the Mysteries can understand.

"The whole valley," Mona added, "is magnificent beyond compare. From the height where stands the noble castle of the 'Raven' and which commands the whole region to the 'World's End' where the 'Pass' closes, the entire glen is a scene of extreme grandeur.

"Little wonder that our forebears celebrated the Rites of *Ceridwen* in the valley of the '*Eglwyseg Pass.*'"

"Why was that name given to the Pass?" asked Mira.

"The name signifies church, and it was fittingly given to the noble rocks which extend all through the glen, rising to immense heights like columnal fanes, making this one of Nature's grandest temples, her cathedral not made by hands, which will endure through the ages. Here she is ever proclaiming the fact that the 'Virgin-born-Son' is the end for which the cycles roll."

In the interest of her theme Mona had forgotten "Carac of the Grail," the thought of whom had led to this conversation regarding his ancestral castle, and the region which it commanded. Not so with Mira, however, as her interest in her sister's words had been largely due to the fact that it was of Carac's home she was speaking.

How strangely indifferent Mona had shown herself to the love which Carac, both as boy and man, had lavished on her. That he still loved Mona, and Mona only, Mira felt sure; and she could not understand her sister's attitude toward him.

"Mona, if thou wilt not be offended I would like to ask thee a question." Mira spoke timidly, but since Carac had evidently accepted the fact that Mona would never be his wife she felt that she must know her sister's mind in the matter.

"I do not see why I should be offended at any question thou might ask me. Speak on, little one, I can answer thee or not as it seemeth to me best," Mona replied, a flush mantling her cheek, however; for she divined something of the import of her sister's words. That Carac's late visit that evening had to do with the matter she needed not to be told.

"Didst thou ever really and truly love any one, Mona? I mean, of course, like a lover. Thou didst never seem to think of anything of this kind like other maidens."

For a moment Mona was seized with a visible agitation, but quickly controlling this she said,—

"Since thou hast asked me this question I will tell thee truly, Mira. It was before thou wert old enough to understand about such matters that I had a lover of whom I was very fond, and then it was the supreme joy of my life to be with him. If we could always have remained children, this state of things might have gone on indefinitely, but we both developed. I grew shy of my ardent wooer whose passion I could not reciprocate. Then I began to think that I had never loved him in the way he wanted to be loved, and when he urged marriage I shrank from such a relation. He was annoyed, and called me cold-hearted, and we had our first difference; for he did not understand how I could still love him, and yet not desire to be his wife.

"I at first grieved very much over this misunder-

standing between us. But later my eyes were opened to the fact that my love had nothing of the carnal element in it. While I would have been willing and happy to spend an eternity with my love, the idea of marriage here grew more and more distasteful to me. I could not contemplate it; and as this was what he desired and constantly urged, I wished to release him, for we had actually plighted our troth.

"But to this he would not consent unless I would go through with him the ancient symbolical rite of a tree-union. The mystic marriage of the Oak and Vine typifies that blest estate which our first parents knew. Then woman was one with man, and he through her his inspiration drew. Thus is it in the close union of the oak and vine, the tree doth then its true efflatus gain.

"I yielded to my lover's desire in this matter, as his heart seemed set upon it. I knew that it gave him no claim upon me in the flesh, and he also knew it but it seemed to satisfy him."

Mira had been all attention to her sister's words, but she now interrupted her to ask—"What is the tree-marriage? What didst thou do?"

"Oh it was a very simple rite in our case. My lover clasped the Vine and I the Oak-tree-bole and we kissed under the Mistletoe, for it was the 'Crab-month'* when the 'golden branch' was in all its glory of bloom.

*July.

"'Now thou art mine according to the ancient marriage rite,' my lover said.

"'Yes,' I replied, 'when we both attain Paradise.'" Mona did not add her lover's reply to this—"I can wait even until then, so that I claim thee at last."

"Since I could not be his wife I did not wish to debar him from this relation, as wife and children might be necessary to his development here.

"Though I did thus give him up, refusing a union with him in Time, I have nevertheless always felt that the higher union of spirit made us one, and that sometime and somewhere I shall claim my own.

> "Soul of my soul we again shall be one,
> As in the beginning, God's will being done."

In this moment Mona seemed to be communing with her own heart, unconscious that she was speaking aloud.

That Mira was sharing her sister's retrospective mood was presently evident, for she cried out—"Why was I not called to do some great work as thou wert, sister? My life is a useless one. I am only a drone in the hive."

"But the *drones* are necessary to the hive, we should have no *swarming* else. Thou art called to a great work, my sister, as much as the priests and seers of the ages are called to theirs. They were born priests and seers, as thou wert born to be the domestic woman, the keeper up of the home and

the sacred hearth-fires. How would the swarming millions which woman is to mother come in but for the domesticity of the sex? The call to any work is always in one's own nature."

CHAPTER XXI.

Caractacus was now waging a warfare upon the Roman legion which constantly called for fresh supplies of men from Rome to reinforce their depleted ranks. This British warrior was roused to this resistance not alone by love of his country and its institutions, but also because of his sister Boadicea's wrongs.

Caractacus determined not only to avenge the treatment of his sister, but also to replace her upon the throne to which as a British-born princess, and the wife of Arviragus, she was entitled.

While the Emperor Claudius had remained in Britain after the marriage of his daughter to the King of the *Iceni*, the court had assumed a gaiety it had never known in Boadicea's time. Roman luxury and Roman pastimes held sway under the *régime* of "*Gwenissa* the Fair," while Roman profligacy overran the land.

Reports of the doings at her husband's court deeply grieved the exiled queen who, with her children, had found refuge at *Gaer Caradoc*, her brother's stronghold in Wales.

Boadicea had always deplored the noisy revels introduced into Britain by the Roman colonists, and now to learn that these "fiddling players" and "jig-dancing actors" had the *entrée* of her own palace filled her with indignation and dismay.

These play-actors had so led captive the fancy of her peasantry that it was often difficult to find a sober, industrious laborer to till the fields, much less to harvest Nature's bounty.

Boadicea knew that if Britons were to hold their country against their oppressors they must be prepared to meet and endure hardships as had their progenitors. The policy of the new government could but make weaklings of her people, and render them unworthy to bear the name of Britons.

The craving for amusement which was everywhere showing itself among the people, was, to her mind, an evidence of demoralization against which she felt that the King, at least, should have set his face. But alas! Arviragus had no longer the power to govern his own realm. Rome and her minions had entered even the palace.

It was from her refuge in Wales that Boadicea wrote the following pathetic letter to her friend Mona.

Caer Caradoc.

"DEAR MONA,

"Dost thy manifold duties allow thee ever to give a thought to the trials of thy erstwhile friend? Canst thou of thy wisdom tell me why the gods allowed me

to be called *Buddig* * when victory never perches upon my banners? Am I not worsted in every conflict? When were wife and mother in the annals of our country ever subjected to so cruel an ordeal as that through which I am now passing? I should weep constantly over my misfortunes did not indignation deny me this relief. The heat of my anger dries my tears before they can fall.

"Write me a line if it is only to say that thou hast not entirely forgotten one who is the most unfortunate of women.

"BOADICEA."

Here was the cry of the wronged wife, not of the voluntarily exiled Queen who had sacrificed her right of dominion that war might cease among her people, and that her husband might continue to hold his throne from the usurper. Naturally did she now ask of what avail had her sacrifice been.

To this appeal of the exiled Queen Mona at once responded:

"Thy plaint is not without reason. That thou hast the spirit to be indignant over thy wrongs rather than broken hearted proves thee to be indeed *Buddig*." In the end thou *wilt* be victorious, and thy sorrows shall be the burning theme when thy country's bardic-rune shall be written. Despair not, my sister. great trials are the test only of great souls; and that thou art truly great is proven in the burden laid upon thee.

"I hear that during these recent festivities at court the King has been very sad of mien. Thou needest not to be assured that his heart is not in such things, but is at *Caer*

* (*Buddig* was one of Boadicea's British names signifying "*The Victorious.*")

Caradoc with thee and his children ; while he is obliged to be an actor in the scenes about him.

" He is only waiting the opportunity to rise and throw off his present shackles. This he will shortly do. In the meantime husband thy faith and take courage ; for thy children's children shall rule in Britain.*

" Ever thy friend,
" MONA."

After the return of the Emperor Claudius to Rome the war broke out afresh in Britain, through the resentment of Caractacus, who was deeply incensed by reports of the gay doings at the court of Arviragus, where *Gwenissa* the Fair had superseded his sister.

For nine years battle had followed battle, for Caractacus had determined to lay down his arms only with his life. This great warrior now attacked certain ungarrisoned but important points held by the Roman colony.

Another strategic movement on his part was to mass a large army at his own stronghold in Wales. This was done to draw off the Roman legions from posts contiguous to the country of the *Iceni*.

The Romans had little idea at this time of the capacity of this British stronghold, and thought to surround Caractacus here and shut him up in his own fortress if nothing more. But at this time the great warrior was not here, His ruse worked, however, and for many a day a warfare was waged between his garrison and the enemy.

* A great-great-grandson of Boadicea was styled the first Christian King of Britain.

Arviragus, or *Prastagus* as he was called after his Roman alliance, was at this time renowned for his great wealth, and while the Roman legions were attacking the fortress in Wales the King of the *Iceni* was secretly preparing to abandon his allegiance to Rome.

His first movement in this direction was to put away the wife forced upon him by the Roman policy. That *Gwenissa* was about to become a mother possibly hastened this step on the king's part, because of the enemy's effort to deprive Boadicea's children of the succession.

Immediately upon this a reunion was effected between Arviragus (Prastagus) and his much aggrieved Queen, who returned amidst the rejoicings of her people to the royal city of the *Iceni*.

Rome seems not to have again interfered between the king and Boadicea, since she ever after maintained her position as Queen of the *Iceni*.

But the relations between the contending powers finally assumed so hostile a character that the king was required by *Vespasian*, who was then acting as Protector, to come in his own person, laying aside all the trappings of royalty, and sue as a suppliant for pardon and protection.

Finally on these terms protection was granted him, and a peace was established between the *Iceni* and the new government, which was not violated during the king's life.

That Arviragus was broken in spirit after this en-

forced submission goes without saying. So great a warrior did not bend his neck to the yoke of the tyrant without suffering that humiliation which the great alone can know. He had realized in all its bitterness the severed ties of family; and once reunited to his dear ones he would risk no second separation from them. Rome might set her foot upon his neck as she had; but for wife and children's sake he would bear the degradation which he no less keenly felt.

Arviragus is affirmed to have been more fierce in war than any contemporary prince; while in peace no one could be more gentle and jocose than he. At this period of his life perhaps nothing, aside from his reunion with his family, gave him greater satisfaction than the following letter from his old-time mentor and friend, written him under the seal of the sacred glain:—

"MOST NOBLE HERCULES,

"Thou hast indeed won the hero's robe, the Lion's skin; and right royally hast thou worn it. In the glory of thy greatest conquest, when thou didst doff thine own and put on thy dead brother's armor, leading the hosts in a charge which made the opposing forces lick the dust, thou wert never so completely the victor as now in thy humiliation. Britain hath crowned thee and the ages shall not uncrown thee. Ever thy friend,

"MONA."

After his subjection to Rome Arviragus seems to have dropped entirely his British name, and to have used that of *Prastagus*, its Romanized form.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Oh, Mona, I must go to Carac. He is suffering for a woman's care. What matters it that I am not his wife? He has neither mother nor sister now. If Leda were living, it would be different. I have never told thee, but the last time I saw him he asked me to be his wife.

"It was just after 'Lammas', and I would not listen to him, for I thought him still madly bent upon self-sacrifice in some form; and that at another time he would not have committed himself to such a proposal. But he had no sooner gone than I regretted being so short with him. I have not forgotten the look in his eyes as he turned away, and it is now two years since."

For a moment Mona was as one suddenly struck dumb. Then she said,—

"Go, sister, and God speed thee, and if Carac asks thee again to be his wife thou wilt not say him nay. I trust thou wilt find him living," Mona added. "It would be a sad enterprise for thee else."

"Hast thou no message to send him, Mona? Thou knowest how he would treasure a word from thee."

"If he is still here in the body I have no message. If he has passed on, he understands and needs no word that I could speak to complete his felicity."

The sisters had just learned that "Carac of the Grail" had been seriously wounded in battle while defending the old fortress "*Dinas Bran*." He was now lying helpless within its walls, mortally wounded as his comrades feared.

As of old with Mira, to will was to do. She had lost nothing of the earnestness of purpose, or the spirit of adventure which had characterized her girlhood. While she had gained in patience and judgment.

Again she appealed to Father *Pasgadwr* in the interest of the man whom she still loved with as steadfast a devotion as ever woman entertained for the man whom her heart had chosen.

Though now rarely leaving his mountain retreat, the old priest at once interested himself to smooth the way for Mira to reach the sufferer. To the good Father a love like this woman's which had asked no return but the welfare of its object, hallowed any relation which she might bear to the man whom she now wished to reach, and whose death-bed she desired to ease with her womanly ministrations.

Bidding her God speed on her way, he furnished her with escort for the journey, and with a stout little beast well used to the saddle. He also gave her a writing in cipher which would greatly aid her should she need to seek shelter by the way. This

writing would be a ready passport in any of the mountain huts so frequently inhabited by those devotees of the old faith who chose to live the life of a recluse.

The good priest did not forget that Mira might also be obliged to pass the barriers of war. But to meet this, the only real danger of this journey which the intrepid woman seemed not to fear, the kind old priest could not arm her. He would pray for her, and that was all he could do, and with this promise he assured her that he should expect to hear of her safe arrival at her destination when her guides returned.

We will not follow Mira on her journey down into the South, prompted by loving solicitude for "Carac of the Grail." That he should have periled his life in a successful defense of the ancient fortress of the "Raven" was her hero's crowning achievement. She felt that he had proven himself a true scion of the house of "Bran."

A woman's stratagem enabled Mira to pass the lines of the enemy; for over her own apparel she had donned the white robe of the Druidess, and when challenged by the guard she was carrying the consolations of religion to the dying.

Rude and lawless as were the Roman soldiery, they allowed her to pass with her escort; for they held in respect and even superstitious awe the female recluses of that hierarchy whose priests were accredited with holding the keys of life and death in their hands.

Many were the battles their priests had stayed when the people were wild for retaliation; and again when conflict was inevitable, their soldiers, had after the ministrations of their priests, been armed with a heroism otherwise unknown in the annals of history. In other words, they were only too eager to lay down for their country and its institutions that life which they were assured would be given them again in tenfold measure beyond.

In Mira's case were any suspicion as to her true character and purpose manifested during her progress through the enemy's lines, which took her several days to pass, she had but to show the writing in cipher under Father *Pasgadwr's* signature to prove that hers was at least a peaceful errand.

The very name of this old Priest was a synonym of the same, for he was well known as the advocate of peace and good will between man and man.

It was just at nightfall that Mira found herself within the fortress of "*Dinas Bran*" whose massive walls and battlements she had sighted for some time.

On reaching the base of the hill where this citadel was located, she had learned to her consternation that her good steed was now utterly spent. This, with her own weariness, had served for a moment to daunt her courage. How was she to make the steep ascent that lay between her and the castle?

To-day donkeys are in waiting to carry travelers up to the ruins of this once impregnable fortress.

But at the time of which we write all the castle supplies were conveyed up the mountain in paniers strapped to the backs of runners. By one of these fleet—footed carriers Mira was borne to the entrance of that stronghold, then the guardian citadel of the whole sacred vale; but within whose ruins ravens now in immense numbers alone hold court.

Fortunate was it for Mira that the castle was not under siege at this time, the attacking force having been effectually routed by its brave defenders.

The old porteress who admitted Mira, on learning her mission took her at once to the cot of "Carac of the Grail," the lineal descendant of that "Chieftain Bran" who had reared this massive pile of stone and mortar.

Naturally had it fallen to a chieftain of the "Raven Hosts" to defend this glorious valley, and its columnar fanes, the *Eglwyseg* rocks.

"Carac of the Grail" was within the fortress and still living; but he was believed to be sinking fast, having received a dangerous wound in the chest.

The old woman who conducted Mira to him expressed much satisfaction that a friend of the dying man had come to be with him. Though the faithful creature spoke a patois that was unfamiliar to Mira's ears, she made herself intelligible, giving her at once to understand that there were also other victims of the late siege within the castle walls.

We will pass briefly over the meeting between

Mira and the sufferer. It was impossible for her to hide the anguish which she experienced on seeing the wasted form and pallid face of him who had been the very incarnation of health and manly vigor. Up to this moment she had not really associated death with him. Not in this form had she thought of the grim messenger taking her love from her.

The wan smile which lighted up the sufferer's face when he recognized his visitor brought from Mira a flood of tears. And when the feeble hand reached out to clasp her own she had bowed her head upon his pillow, and for a few moments wept unrestrainedly.

Then with a great effort controlling herself she turned to the old porteress who still lingered within the room, and asked when the patient had taken nourishment. Learning that he had refused food for the last forty-eight hours, Mira begged to have some wine brought, and a porridge of goat's milk immediately made.

The woman quitted the room to execute this commission, and Mira was left alone with the sufferer. Carac was now lying with closed eyes, and apparently unconscious of her presence. He was certainly going from her. She dropped upon her knees, and with her hands raised to heaven she asked in a silent supplication that the life so precious to her be spared.

While still in this position the door opened.

THE TURRET CHAMBER AT RAVEN CASTLE

Some one had entered the room. Thinking it was the porteress with the wine Mira turned to receive it. The next moment she started as if she had seen an apparition; for who should be standing on the other side of the cot but "Ivan the Hare." The latter gave her a passing glance, evidently not recognizing her in the unfamiliar garb which she had assumed.

Stooping over the sick man, Ivan gently raised him, changing his position to a more restful one. Then with a deep-drawn sigh he took up his station by the bedside, wetting every few moments the sufferer's lips with cold water.

So preoccupied was he in watching every breath the sick man drew that he was apparently unconscious of any other presence.

For a moment a strange feeling bordering almost upon hate took possession of Mira. Was "Ivan the Hare" always destined to step in between herself and Carac? Notwithstanding the feeling of repugnance which the sight of him now awakened in her breast, she was fain to recognize the fact that he was greatly improved in appearance.

At this moment hearing a step in the passage Mira went to the door where the old porteress stood with a tiny glass of wine in one hand, and a steaming porringer in the other.

She had finally succeeded in finding some wine, and the faithful creature was profuse in apologies for there being so little.

Mira scarcely heeded those, but taking the glass from her hand hastened to the bedside, while the old servant placed the porringer upon the deep recessed window seat close at hand; for Carac's cot was in the turret chamber of the castle, and only one narrow, mullioned window admitted the light.

Mira had not yet removed from her head the hood of her robe, and now drawing it forward the better to conceal her face she sank upon her knees on the opposite side of the cot from Ivan.

As she did so her hand came in contact with his. Putting it impatiently aside she made as if she would, unaided, administer the wine in her hand.

"Alas! he will take nothing, madam. He is past that," was the gentle remonstrance which met her ear.

"Raise him," she said shortly in a strange, unnatural voice.

Ivan did as bidden, supporting the sick man's head upon his own shoulder, but even then taking no notice of the woman who would supplant him as nurse in the sick-room.

As to Mira herself, she had been suddenly seized with such a fit of trembling that it was a full moment before she had sufficient command of her nerves to raise to the sufferer's lips the few drops of wine which she had determined at all hazards to give him.

Was it indeed too late! Had he not the power to

take nourishment? The patient was apparently unconscious of her effort. She must rouse him. She could not let him die in this way.

"Oh, if he would only swallow some of this wine! How is he to live if he will take nothing?" she cried. Then forgetful of everything but the desire to save this fast-ebbing life Mira caught the dying man to her bosom, and with all the passion of love she sought to recall him to a knowledge of her presence with him.

"Carac, my darling, it is Mira. Dost thou not know me? Thou must live for Mira's sake. Oh, why dost thou not rouse up again? Thou wert glad a few moments since to see thine own Mira."

Then as he did not respond in any way to her pleading, she cried with renewed fervor, and in tones of persuasiveness calculated to reach even the ear of the dying:—

"Oh, Carac, my Knight of the Grail, see! it is the Cup, and there is life for thee in it. Dost thou not hear me, darling? Thou wilt not refuse the Cup, thou knowest it is the vessel of life." These, and like impassioned utterances, seemed at last to rouse the sinking man, who essayed to speak, and presently uttered the words:—

"Yes, there is life in the Cup, and every other good, but that is the divine 'Chalice.' Far be it from me to refuse that."

"He will take it," cried Mira, mistaking his words, and releasing from her arms the form she had

been so tenderly embracing. Then seizing the glass she held it to the sufferer's lips.

To her infinite joy he swallowed some of its contents. Then for a brief moment his gaze rested full upon her while a smile irradiated his features.

In throwing off the hood of her cloak Mira had loosened the snood which bound her hair, and now her sunny tresses fell in rippling masses about her shoulders, forming a complete aureole in the rays of the westering sun which, at the moment, sent its beams across the turret chamber.

It was but a moment that Carac had regained consciousness; then his eyes had closed again, and he lay as one who had ceased to breathe. The woman bending over him quickly pressed her hand against his heart. Was the life-stream still ebbing and flowing in its chalice, or had the chill of death congealed it at its source? No, the heart's even, though weak, pulsations, told Mira that the wine of life was still flowing there.

As if she had indeed brought him the life-giving cup, sleep succeeded the lethargy into which the sick man had for a time fallen. Then tired Nature asserted herself, and Mira also slept, her head pillowed in her arms beside her lover's cot.

In the meantime the man who had for the last two years followed "Carac of the Grail" in the fortunes of war as his henchman or body servant, did not desert his post. "Ivan the Hare" had

proved to be of better stuff than he had been accredited with by his neighbors.

Faithfully had Ivan served him whom he had constituted his liege lord, and beside whose deathbed he now believed himself to be keeping vigil.

In his anxiety about his master he had failed at first to recognize Mira. Having been told that one of the sisterhood had arrived at the castle to afford the solace of religion to the dying, he had not been surprised to find a woman in the attitude of prayer in the sick room.

Not until Mira had thrown back her hood, and in an agony of supplication, clasped the dying man in her arms, entreating him to live for her sake, did Ivan realize that this woman was she against whom he had so sinned in his youth, and whom he had not seen for years.

This knowledge coming upon him so suddenly had, for the moment, unnerved him. But for an heroic effort at self-control, he would have given voice to his surprise and consternation in a cry that would have supplemented the wail which burst from Mira's lips when she found herself unable to rouse Carac from his state of syncope.

Choking this back, however, Ivan with a sudden gasp for breath watched the movements of this impassioned creature now in the full development of a splendid womanhood; for Mira was no longer the slender, girlish being he had known, the immature

child still in her teens. This was certainly Mira, but how unlike her former self.

That she must have recognized him at once, though choosing to ignore the fact, he felt equally certain. That Mira had always loved "Carac of the Grail" he well knew; and he determined now to be no barrier to the expression of a love which had dominated her whole life.

When Mira finally roused from the heavy sleep into which she had fallen, it was to find herself alone with the sick man, for Ivan had at the moment stolen from the room.

Carac was now tossing fitfully upon his pallet, while the first gray streaks of dawn were coming through the casement. With a sense of relief that her ministrations were not to be shared, Mira at once bestirred herself, and Carac was presently conscious of something cool upon his brow, and then his face and hands shared in the grateful ablution.

Mira found the old porteress her ready ally. Whatever she desired for her patient was by some means shortly forthcoming; though Mira did not at the time associate Ivan with this fact.

She was untiring in her efforts to make her patient take nourishment; even though it might be ever so little that passed his lips. This little she believed to have the efficacy of a sacrament. For among the treasures of the old castle she had found an ancient "Leontica-chalice," having engraved upon it the Mithraic-lion with the radiated mane. From this

vessel the sick man took all his nourishment; and, as Mira asserted, every draught swallowed by the sufferer did seem to bring him added life and strength.

Mira did not realize the fact that she was daily giving to Carac something of her own splendid vitality when she held him for hours in her arms, because he was thus better able to gain the repose which his system demanded.

In these days Mira longed for the wisdom regarding herbs which her mother had possessed. That certain simples were soothing and healing she remembered her mother had believed; and calling all her own knowledge in these matters to her aid, she used it in dressing the wound in Carac's breast.

Mira's ministrations in this direction were rewarded by her finding one morning that the inflammation was subsiding, and granulation was setting in. This greatly encouraged her in the belief that Carac would soon be well. Having had no experience in such matters she did not realize that this appearance of healing was simply external, that the real trouble lay deeper.

The extreme weakness of her patient she attributed to the loss of blood which he had sustained; not to what was in fact the cause, the serious wound involving the lung which was destined sooner or later to end his life.

Meanwhile Mira saw very little of Ivan, as he did not intrude upon her during the daytime in which her patient was left to her care. At night, however,

he insisted upon taking his place as watcher by his master's bedside.

Carac's apparent improvement would have misled any one less interested, but Ivan was not deceived. He knew that the sick man could not recover, and that Mira was feeding her heart upon false hopes.

"Carac of the Grail" would never again bear arms in his country's forlorn cause, or even lend his aid in defense of the ancient fortress of his ancestors.

The day came, however, when he had so far gained in strength as to leave the turret chamber, and creep out into the sunshine where on one of the battlements, easy of access, he spent the warmer portion of the day.

Now he was often irritable and exacting, making demands that were not easily met, and unwilling that Mira should leave him for a moment. Whatever his mood she humored him in it. This was the case with one exception. When he talked of his work and of getting back to it, she supposed his mind was still dwelling on the disquieting time of the siege, and so she strove to turn his thoughts away from the subject.

It was some little time ere Mira learned the real nature of what he called his work. This, it appeared, was an uncompleted picture which he desired to finish. He had been engaged upon it when the castle fell under siege ; for the intervals between the enemy's attacks upon the fortress often gave its defenders long periods of inaction.

Carac had employed one of these in striving to portray in a symbolical picture a truth which man is slow to apprehend. Carac had so thrown himself into this work that his health had suffered somewhat in consequence.

This picture Mira had not yet seen, when an accident one day revealed it to her. She had by mistake opened the door of an unused room, thinking it to be that of a sick comrade in arms whom Carac had wished her to see. She had often ministered to his needs in Ivan's absence.

Instead of the pallet of the wounded soldier Mira found herself confronted by a picture before which she stood enthralled. Every sense seemed called to share in the vision which met her eye. Such a spell did this cast upon her that she entirely forgot what had brought her there.

Anything so grand in its conception as a work of art Mira had never seen before ; and she gazed long and earnestly, drinking in, as it were, the very spirit of the work.

On the wall of this room, in one of its oaken panels which had become mellowed in tone by time, was portrayed the figure of a cross, standing by the wayside. Prostrate upon the ground before the cross was the figure of a man. That it was a pilgrim dead, fallen on the highway, the dress and limp position of the limbs attested.

A singular feature of the picture was the perfect cross which the body formed with arms outstretched

upon those shadowed arms which the cross threw on the highway.

Above in the blue ether an angel was on the wing. Casting a backward glance upon the prostrate figure, the angelic features were irradiated as with exultation. The picture was not only powerful in its conception, but the work was executed with a skill and finish which extended to every detail, while its softness of color rivaled Nature's own handiwork.

So realistic was the portrayal that Mira did not for some moments realize that she was not actually contemplating a scene in nature. It was not until she had taken in all the details of the picture, that she noticed evidences in the room of the artist's craft.

Then only did it dawn upon her that this was Carac's work; that this must be, as he considered, his incomplete picture; though where it lacked in finish did not appear to Mira. He had of late talked to her about the picture, the subject of which he called "The Transfiguration." But Mira had shown no curiosity in regard to it as she felt it was not a safe subject. In his present condition she feared that any use of his arms might cause his wound to break out afresh.

Mira knew that Carac had worked in color even in the old days, and that he had learned many of the secrets of the art from their priests who were pro-

ficients, having delved for the same in Nature's workshops.

She had resolved on returning to Carac to say nothing of the picture, but he saw at once that something had moved her deeply. This was apparent in her heightened color, as well as in her manner toward himself.

"What is it, dear?" he asked, taking her hand firmly in his own lest she escape from him, as she was wont when anything disturbed her.

"I have seen it; the picture;" she said below her breath her eyes having a far away look in them, as of one even then beholding a vision. "It is wonderful. I cannot get away from it."

"Just so with our cross, we cannot get away from that while in the body. The great drama in which the Galilean figured has taught us this, that it is to be borne with meekness and patience to the end; to these only is the mystery of the resurrection of the glorified body known."

"Oh, Carac, thou dost talk like Mona. She says that the mysteries of our ancient ceremonials are consummated in Him—that He is our great Forerunner in the race, because He accomplished in the flesh that regeneration of its natural atoms which it will take mankind the whole great cycle to bring in."

Then changing the subject Mira asked Carac why he had said his picture was unfinished?

"Because I have not fully portrayed my ideal. I

want to do this, and to leave the picture as my contribution to the treasures gathered within these walls by those who, like myself, have borne the '*Lion*' blazonry."

Carac had more than once spoken of the ancient relics belonging to his ancestors, and which were here preserved in the old fortress *Dinas Bran*. These he had promised, when able, to show Mira.

He now alluded to the old Lion-fountain which was just without the entrance to the fortress. "Our forebears erected these only at springs that were never dry. They understood Nature's teachings, and these fountains served to remind the people of the unfailing spring, the great *Heart* of the universe, where the thirst of the human heart can alone be quenched."

"Yes," replied Mira thoughtfully; "I came upon these ancient fountains on my way hither, and the water always gushing from the Lion's mouth was to me, indeed, like the water of life when famished with thirst."

"The 'Lion' as a symbol of the heart, or sovereign function, taught the ancient world the source and center of that flow whence are the springs of life; and what is true in the natural world is true in the spiritual also." And Carac continued. "I am learning to see things from this standpoint in these days. That the outward world, is but a mirror of the unseen world I have at last learned."

Carac's kinsman, "Bran the Raven," now holding

the castle by right of primogeniture, was feeble with age and seldom left his apartments ; but he had asked to see Mira soon after she arrived. On her complying with his request he had received her very kindly, commending her courage and fidelity in seeking her wounded lover.

Of Carac, the old Chieftain had nothing to say that was not in his praise. He lamented that his brave young kinsman had sustained so serious a wound ; but he apparently believed that youth would triumph in the end, and that Carac would recover. The "Raven" stock were never weaklings, their's was the prowess of the lion.

After this Mira often saw the old Chieftain, who had apparently been pleased with her, while she had immediately taken him into her heart as Carac's nearest of kin.

She had not long been at the castle when seldom a day passed that she was not sent for to spend some time with him; and when she felt it right to leave Carac she did not fail to go.

On one of these visits Mira had spoken of the beauty of the surrounding country, and the interest she had been led to feel in the region because of what her sister had told her of its being the "Vale of the Mysteries."

The old Chief's face lighted up, and he arose from his chair as he responded—"Yes, thou art right. We are overlooking the 'Vale of Ceridwen,' where her mysteries were long celebrated ; and this old

fortress, erected by my ancestors, has had the honor to guard from the profane foot of the invader the sacred 'Pass' where the mountains come together at the 'Virgin's Rock,' a spot consecrated to the holiest teachings."

The old Chieftain spoke with a fervor which proved him to be a true scion of the "House of the Raven," a descendant of that "*Bran Bendigied* the Blessed," who first bore the banner of the "Raven-Hosts.

"If I could only have seen the mysteries of *Ceridwen* I think I should have been the happiest of women," sighed Mira.

Chieftain Bran was pacing back and forth between his chair and the window, but he stopped suddenly and regarded Mira for a moment ere he said: "Knowest thou not, child, that thou art a witness to these same mysteries which Nature is ever enacting? That they do not find spiritual interpretation to-day as they did formerly in the sacred rites, when the people understood Nature's speech, proves not that they have ceased.

"The great starry wheel is ever turning in the heavens, and while it continues to revolve the mysteries of *Ceridwen* will cease not to be enacted by man."

Mira, though not fully comprehending the import of the old Chieftain's words, recognized that he was speaking of Nature's great drama.

"I would like to go up the 'Pass' some day and

THE VIRGIN'S CLIFF

see 'Our Lady's Rock,' said Mira who had been gazing off into the valley. "Mona has told me that it is called 'The World's End.'"

"Yes, it has always borne that name, for not only does the 'Pass' here close at the 'Virgin's Rock, or Crag of Arthur,' but here Nature tells us in her own teachings this mystery, that the cyclic-bringing-forth is consummated in the starry symbol of the 'Virgin.'

"This, my child, is the teaching of the '*Eglwyseg* Pass.' It is 'Our Lady of the Heavens, who brings in 'Arthur, the Knight of the Holy-Grail,' regenerate man."

The old Chieftain saw that Mira had not taken his words in their supreme sense; but this would come to her some day. The vigor of her body was now in the ascendant, this would later give place to the vigor of the spirit which would also bring in its harvest.

He knew that Mira had had a heart-history, and that she believed she had been denied the one great boon of existence, union with the man whose splendid physique had captivated her senses.

He also knew that Nature had indeed dealt more kindly with her in this matter of denial than Mira was yet able to realize. Her ideal had never been shattered by a mismated marriage, and some day this physical ideal would be exchanged for the spiritual.

Since the old Chieftain had been disabled by age

from taking any part in the garrison life of the fortress, he had spent much of his time in reading, or musing, over certain ancient romances; which seemed to absorb him to the exclusion of the outward world about him.

Mira wondered much that works of this nature should so engage his thoughts, and in the fact she saw evidence of the dotage for which his years might seem to account. Many of these tales were so quaint in style and expression that she found their sense obscure. But that they were all of a romantic character, though often dealing with war and carnage, she would have affirmed.

There was at least always a youth and a maiden who loved each other, and who were kept apart by a strange perversity of Fate, who at the critical moment always stepped in to separate them.

Mira, we say, marveled that tales of this nature should have anything of interest for the grave old man whose life had been singularly lacking in the usual social and family ties which give zest and flavor to human existence. What could he know of love and lovers, he who had spent most of his life in armor at the head of the "Raven-Hosts?"

Mira did not at this time conceive of the real interest which these tales had for the old Chief. She little dreamed of the reverent spirit in which he conned these pages, reading between the lines where she had found the sense obscure.

In these mystical works Chief Bran found the

great life-drama which Nature is ever portraying—that eternal romance in which man and woman are always seeking that virgin-alliance which was theirs in the beginning; the soul's primal mate as in the Edenic state.

None knew better than this old Chief that the paradisiacal condition of the race is to be fully regained only in the great cyclic adjustment. In the meantime he recognized the fact that the human quest goes on with all that heat of pursuit which constantly finds a physical demonstration on the natural plane.

Mira noticed that the eyes of the old Chief would often forsake the page entirely, and wander off to the noble temples rising in the distance columnar-like, guarding for miles the entrance to that wondrous 'Pass' where the mountains of rock come together at "The World's End."

The mysteries of his ancient faith had revealed to the old Chieftain the truth that Nature is always guarding that primal-revelation which is written in the starry hieroglyphics.

While veiling this knowledge from those who would profane it, great Nature is ever asserting the fact, that when the sign *Virgo* is on the ecliptic, is the period of the great bringing forth through a virgin-alliance.

Naturally had Nature chosen this forest seclusion to carve in the solid rock that majestic figure of the "Virgin and Child" where the cliffs meet, and the

"Pass" closes. Here the foot of man can go no farther, hence to all intents and purposes "The World's End."

In these days Mira rarely saw anything of "Ivan the Hare." She was aware that much of his time was spent in nursing the wounded who were still in the castle; but she also knew that he made occasional pilgrimages up the "Pass" to the "Virgin's Cliff" as to a shrine. It was affirmed by certain servitors about the castle that he did this as a penance. Sure it was that he made a frequent offering at this shrine, for rarely now was "Our Lady's Head" unadorned with an oak-leaf chaplet.

How Ivan managed to place this wreath in position at such an inaccessible height no one undertook to explain, and he was never seen to perform the feat. That he had severe bruises to nurse after some of these pilgrimages was later on remembered. But this was after his devotion had cost him his life; for the body of "Ivan the Hare" was found one morning at the foot of the "Virgin's Cliff" by those who had gone out to search for him because he had not returned the previous night.

Evidently he had met his death by a fall, and from a great height, as the mangled body proved. His effort to make his usual offering to the *Virgin* had been unsuccessful. This time it garlanded the head of the *Child* in her outstretched arms. Was this after all what Ivan had intended? The ground below, at least, was strewn with oaken leaves. It

was believed that Ivan had conceived the idea of propitiating "Our Lady" for some youthful indiscretion in these offerings at her shrine.

When this came to Mira's ears she shut herself into her room and was not seen again for the day. That Ivan's idea in these offerings had been that of atonement she felt was more than likely, for a violation of the law of chastity was esteemed as a sin against the *Virgin*, and this law the Kelts regarded as most binding.

Was not Arthur to come again through a rebirth? (such was the letter of the truth at least) and how was this possible unless the honor of woman was jealously guarded.

Ivan had certainly made the great offering, even that of his life, in the vale sacred to *Ceridwen*. That his was one only of the millions of lives which she demands in her cyclic-bringing-forth of a regenerated race does not make less the offering of "Ivan the Hare."

CHAPTER XXIII

Arviragus the last son of "Kimbelin the Keen" was dead. Broken in spirit he had also succumbed in health after his humiliation. To hold his kingdom under a protectorate was a subjugation to which such a nature as his could not submit.

The evil days had come to his beloved realm, and vice stalked abroad unchidden. This King who had distinguished himself by the princely munificence with which he had rewarded merit was obliged to see his loyal people made to submit to a tyrannical sway as unjust as it was degrading.

But Rome now had Britain under her heel, and the king who had desired to propitiate the ruling powers for the sake of his dear ones had left a will making the Emperor co-heir with his two daughters, the children of Boadicea. The Queen herself was not mentioned in this last testament of the King, her husband, because he would not risk bringing her into conflict with the government that had always been hostile to her.

But this did not avail, for when was the greed of Rome ever satisfied? The rapacity which had been kept in check during the King's life, was now with-

out restraint. His kingdom was at once overrun and his very palace plundered.

The officials of the Emperor seized upon the entire effects of the late king, regardless of the provisions of his will. And now again did Boadicea find herself in conflict with the ruling powers. When she would have carried out the King's wishes the emissaries of Rome claimed the whole estate. Her children's portion was demanded in remuneration for the loan made to the Prince Cadallan, her father.

This loan, as has been previously stated, was arranged by Cartismandua, the Roman Queen of Britain, after she wedded Cadallan, and was advanced to the Brigantes.

Boadicea, who was Queen of the Iceni, did not consider that her husband's estate should be held for this debt. And because she would not tamely submit to see her children defrauded in this manner she awoke the ire of the Roman officials. By them she was delivered into the hands of the brutal Roman soldiery, and forced to suffer in her royal person the common punishment of the scourge.

This noble woman of Trojan ancestry was beaten by rods in the hands of Roman ruffians, while her daughters suffered from indignities which stain the page of British history. Little wonder is it that these outrages seemed to deaden the Queen's heart to every feeling but that of vengeance for her wrongs.

Her loyal-hearted Britons were also maddened to the bitterest retaliation by the sufferings of their ill-

fated Queen. They at once flew to arms and rallied about her person, ready for any form of revenge that she might dictate. This outrage enlisted them all in one common cause.

Boadicea, by her indignant protest against any farther toleration of the Romans upon their soil, incited her soldiery to an undying enmity with their oppressors.

Her unequaled heroism in misfortune won the admiration of her soldiers, and she had soon gathered about her a force which outnumbered any other previous uprising in Britain. History tells us that five thousand women were also enlisted in her cause; and that when she finally took the field it was with from eighty to a hundred thousand men. Some accounts give the number as much larger.

Boadicea's address to her soldiers lives in our literature as one of the grandest perorations from the lips of a woman.

While this revolt under Boadicea was growing in magnitude, Seutonius, the head of the Roman forces in Britain, had drawn off his troops for an attack upon the Island of Mona, the stronghold of Druid worship, and of British independence.

In the meantime the Roman colony established in Britain is said to have had supernatural warnings of coming disaster. These warnings, however, were unheeded at the time, because believed to be the machinations of priestcraft. Strange sounds of wail-

ing were heard in the council chamber, and in the theater; and strange sights seen on the shore and in the river. At this time the image of Victory fell to the ground in their temple in such a position that it looked like one who had fled from the enemy, and stumbled in his flight. In other words, the impending spiritual convulsion found material expression.

Rome believed that the conquest of the sacred Isle, of Mona the very stronghold of their so-called superstitions, would be the final overthrow of British rule and influence; for here was the court of ecclesiastical and civil justice in Britain.

The devotees of the old faith had for a long time realized that the great conflict must take place here on this Island, where their sacred groves and temples had been consecrated by centuries of ceremonial rites and observances. And here they had massed themselves to meet the attack.

It was not to arms they resorted. Warfare was no part of the Druidical policy. Hence its devotees were utterly unprepared to hold their ground against the Roman legions skilled in the art of war.

The Druids were not without a realization of this, but they resolved to perish together when the struggle came. If their ancient institution was to be wiped out it should be with their blood. It was no ignoble death they would die, for sooner than fall by the arms of the Romans they had determined to throw themselves upon their own altar fires, kindled for this purpose, and thus perish.

That many did die in this manner history affirms.

Mona, now a high-priestess in the temple of her order, with many of her adherents had joined their friends on this island so long the center of their cult. It was here that she first learned of the indignities suffered by the widowed Queen, Boadicea. At the same time she was informed of the revolt of the loyal Britons who were headed by their intrepid Queen.

The latter was now bent upon the extermination of the foe, and was holding councils with her Chieftains to concert measures for an organized rebellion.

At these meetings Boadicea is said to have personally addressed her ministers on the subject of their mutual wrongs, affirming that, "Since the Romans have come into power in this Island there is no indignity, however vile, no cruelty, however grievous, which we have not suffered."

One of the evil results of the Roman rule against which she was strongest in her denunciations was the introduction of vices heretofore unknown in Britain. It was after one of these councils of war that Boadicea received the following communication by a trusted messenger from her life-long friend, Mona.

"Dear Boadicea,

"I write to commend thine action. Thou couldst not stand quietly by and see thy children defrauded

of their rights. Thine was not the craven spirit to seek to make terms with plunderers. Thou art only true to thy blood in not submitting to the wrongs inflicted on thee and thine. I honor thee for the stand thou hast taken.

"Though thou mayest claim to have put away thy sovereignty, and to wage this war on a common ground with thy people, still all true Britons are thy loyal subjects, and a Roman will fall for every pang thou hast suffered. I rejoice in thy resolve not to outlive the defeat of thy just cause. It is inevitable that thy forces will be greatly outnumbered; but the gods foresaw thy glorious death when thou wert named *Buddig*, the Victorious.

"We shall shortly meet, dear friend, on the other side the veil, for I shall have passed over before thee. The enemy is surrounding us, and the attack may be made upon the island at any moment. Our people are prepared; but will offer no resistance other than perhaps an attempt to intimidate the soldiery whose superstitious awe of our priests is well known. If our would-be murderers are not deterred through fear, we shall know that the end has come—that the 'Honey-lipped' dispensation is finished.

"The first dispensation of the celestial wisdom culminated with the Flood which made our race exiles from the 'Summer-country.' Ours here in the 'Honey-Island' is also destined to terminate in a flood, but it will be one of blood.

"With the Institution of Druidism will pass out

the spiritual sense, or the *internal* teachings of religion. Then will Rome foist upon Britain the *externals*, or letter of the same. These will prove the swaddling clothes of Truth, and the ages only will extricate the divine Child.

"Last night I had a vision of the 'Grail.' This is the third time that I have seen the sacred vessel, sign and symbol of the regenerate heart. I was making my customary evening offering at the altar in the grove near by, having strewn it with oaken leaves, when the *Grail* appeared borne on a beam of light. It came directly over the altar, and there its contents were poured out blood-red like wine. That it bedewed my offering I take as a foreshadowing of the great sacrifice which is here to be offered; such a holocaust as the all-seeing Sun never shone down upon.

"Our people, like our oak groves, are to be couped, cut down; but from the old stock will yet spring a more vigorous growth. The primeval roots of the Heart-tree cannot be eradicated. This, the hieroglyphic of the starry Oak* is teaching.

"The sacred science has been profaned, and consequently as a system of teaching, it is to pass away. Had its decadence not been nearly complete, the gods would never have allowed the usurpation of a for-

* The constellation of the Oak is pictured as couped, but from the old trunk is springing a vigorous branch, and this is entirely in the "Milky Way," or the celestial path of the Heavens.

eign power in our land. This is indeed the day of the *Feet*, and the Truth as our Fathers knew it is trampled under the feet of man.

"And now, my dear friend, lest thou shouldst think that the sacred teachings will entirely perish with our order, I must tell thee that we have carefully guarded against this calamity, for such it would indeed be should nothing but the letter of the ancient revelation survive.

"Our Priests have made a number of secret journeys to the 'Round-Table' at *Caerleon*, and in the underground temple there they probably have secreted the *Arthurian* records. And with these the precious 'dragon-skin' parchment whereon is transcribed in letters of gold the great cyclic-epic which is written in the starry ciphers.

"Some day in the distant future, these will be found where they have hidden them away, and then will the great antiquity of Druidism be vindicated, for the constellations will bear witness to this primeval wisdom.

"In the meantime the astronomers of Britain will watch with unwearied scrutiny our zenith star in the *Dragon's* Head. They will find a *natural* law, only in its aberrations of light, but they will fail to understand why it is from the *Dragon's* Head that this law is discovered.

"In closing this epistle, I wish to say, that I look forward exultantly to the coming conflict. Whatever may be the apparent issue, the Truth can never

perish. The seed which we have sown will in time bring forth a harvest. It must first, however, be quickened through generations of righteous living. I am only too happy that Fate ordained me to be one of *Mylitta's* Bees. It is the Bees who carry the pollen and fertilize the seed.

"Finally, Rome will not always rule in Britain. She with her pomp and pride will pass out, while Britain remains a power in the earth. The Chair of *Ceridwen* was founded here, and the Fathers affirmed that here it should remain until the doom. The passing ages will ever and again bring in a revival of the celestial wisdom, for The Heavens are telling it.

"I will say farewell only for a little time,

MONA."

Druidism had always been regarded with suspicion by the Romans, who never came into any understanding of it. But its chief offense to them, was its evident tendency to keep alive a spirit of nationality.

At this time the allies of Rome little dreamed of the growing revolt headed by the British Queen. The real danger, of which *Suetonius* seems to have had no foreboding, came from the other side of the Island. Here, with her devoted partisans, Boadicea was preparing to head an insurrection that was to fill the whole Roman empire with amazement and consternation.

Nor did the intelligence of the impending attack upon the Island of Mona which had come from her old-time friend retard the Queen's preparations. It did but furnish a fresh incentive.

Before concerted action could be taken, however, word reached Boadicea that their beloved Island had fallen under the forces of *Suetonius*.

The heroic band of devotees to the old faith had perished either as voluntary victims upon their own altars, or had been hewn down by the sabers of the enemy. The spot is still shown where the barbarous Roman hordes put to death the unoffending Druids at a ferry called *Porthamel* across the *Menai* Straits."

This wholesale slaughter of their Priests and Druids precipitated the rebellion, Boadicea saw that the moment had arrived for the decisive stroke, and at the head of her vast army she moved upon the unguarded Roman settlements, burning towns and putting to the sword their inhabitants. Her army did not attack the military posts, but wreaked their vengeance on the unfortified towns. No quarter was given, no prisoners taken. Men, women, and children were put to death with hideous cruelty. It was the oppression of years for which vengeance was taken. Seventy or eighty thousand victims perished in that portion of Britain which had been reduced to the condition of a Roman colony.

This triumphal march of the Britons brought them finally to London, which city they found nearly

deserted; but those who remained within its walls were put to death by fire or sword.

Boadicea is said to have ridden in a war chariot with her two daughters beside her. The Queen's noble mien, her dazzling fairness of complexion, and her deep auburn tresses hanging to her waist, are declared to have made her a striking figure and a universal object of admiration among her troops. These, with the splendor of her apparel, and the rich trappings of her chariot are enlarged upon by the historian.

The Queen constantly cheered on her clans, imploring them to conquer or die. She affirmed that death would be the only resource left to herself, a woman, unless their cause was victorious. They, as men, might live and be slaves if it so pleased them.

But ill fortune, which had ever seemed to be the lot of Boadicea, followed her now. Though for a time the Britons had carried all before them, reverses were to follow; for the foe was even then advancing upon them.

Suetonius, having effected his object in reducing the Island of Mona had supposed that the whole of Britain would yield to the Roman yoke; but he was soon to learn that the entire country was in a state of revolt.

On receiving word of the disasters overtaking his improperly protected garrisons, he quitted the Island which had been the scene of his late disgraceful engagement; and with his army marched through a

hostile country toward London by the great British road called "Watling Street."

His tenth legion, which was stationed on the borders of the Brigantes, who were still independent, had covered his retreat from the late scene of carnage, though his army had suffered greatly in the depletion of its ranks.

Suetonius is said to have had four legions under his command at this time, and when the contending armies met, as they soon did, it was with terrible slaughter on both sides, although the Britons suffered most. Here men, women, and children are declared to have fallen in the British ranks, as the families of these warriors were also committed to the cause. They would share the victory, or perish in the defeat.

Little wonder that history affirms it to have been a terrific slaughter; for the Britons fought for their religion, their country and the honor of woman.

When Boadicea learned that her army was completely routed, that the ranks of her soldiers had fallen like standing wheat under the blast of a tempest, she recognized that their cause was lost. The gods were implacable. Without the shedding of blood there was no atonement for her people.

Then this woman of dauntless courage met death as she had vowed to meet it—by her own hand. She would never a second time fall into the hands of the barbarous Roman soldiery.

Boadicea had upon her person that which would

accomplish her purpose.. Before swallowing the fatal potion she embraced her daughters, bidding them a loving farewell. Among her last words to them was the charge to remember their noble ancestry, and never to bow the knee to the gods of Rome.

CHAPTER XXIV.

At *Dinas Bran* the sad tidings fell like a thunder bolt. Echoes of the wars so fiercely raging in the South and East had failed to reach the castle.

The fall of the Island of Mona, and the reverses of Boadicea's army were the intelligence brought by the same messenger in a letter sent by Rold to his sister. It was in this way that Mira heard of her bereavement.

Mona dead! That was the one fact that stood out to her in this terrible news. She had believed her sister invincible. One so pure and good must be under the protection of the gods; no evil could come to her.

Mira had known that the Sacred Isle was likely to suffer siege, for Mona had written her to this effect She in return had begged her sister not to remain where she was liable to be without supplies during the attack.

But that the inhabitants of the Island would be exterminated, that all those holy men and women would perish, Mira had not for a moment dreamed.

In her own anguish at receiving this intelligence

she had for the moment forgotten all prudence. Though the man whom she had for weeks so carefully and assiduously nursed was in no condition to bear the shock which this knowledge would bring him, she had at once flown to him with her grief.

"Oh, Carac, they are all killed, Mona and the rest," she said in an awestruck whisper, her cheek blanching as she spoke. "Thou shouldst read this dreadful letter from Rold. He says that none are believed to have survived. Those who did not take their own lives were massacred by the barbarians. My God! it is too dreadful," and Mira went down on to the floor in a swoon.

After her first tragic utterance Carac had seemed not to hear what she was saying. Nor did he take any note of her fall. He did not see the prostrate figure at his feet; he was looking off into space.

"Mona, my Saint, I will come to thee," he murmured. Then as if communing with himself. "She was right not to mate herself with me here. I was never worthy of her, and she knew we could not have come together in an earthly union. But in heaven we shall be one because we found each other here."

Mira never knew how long she had lain in a dead faint on receiving the intelligence of her sister's death. But on coming to herself she became suddenly conscious that she was alone, Carac's chair was vacant. This of itself would have startled her, as he had not regained his strength sufficiently to

move about very much alone. She sprung up with a stifled scream. A premonition that something had befallen him took possession of her.

Fear lent her wings and she flew through the narrow passages where he was wont to walk when able to do so.

Something arrested her steps at the door of the room where his still unfinished picture ornamented the wall. Mira flung open the door, knowing as she did so that she would find him here.

Yes, he was lying prostrate before the picture, with his arms outspread on either slde. Mira called to him gently at first, then frantically; but there was no response. In that moment she knew that "Carac of the Grail" would never more respond to call of hers. He was with Mona.

Slowly raising her eyes to the picture, she was startled by the resemblance which the features bore to Carac's own. It was Carac's face that seemed to look down upon her, illuminated and irradiated with a joy not born of earth.

Had he lived she well knew that she could never have won from him such a look of rapture as he seemed to cast back at her now. No, he and Mona were together.

Mira would never again put her loss in the balance with the infinite gain of the two whom she had loved best upon earth.

"Carac of the Grail" had in truth laid down his eross, the poor weak body, from which he was now

free. That he had in anticipation realized something of the glorious freedom of the emancipated spirit, his picture attested in the effect which it had upon Mira.

That the walls of the old castle bore other evidence of his work she later learned, but nothing ever gave her so much satisfaction as this last effort of his skill, before it she would spend hours, and in leaving it she would seem to have fresh assurance of the fuller life into which he had entered.

Mira felt it was fitting that the body of her Hero should be laid to rest just outside the castle walls, on the summit of that height which overlooks the sacred "Pass," and the "Crag of Arthur and our Lady."

Here through the ages have reposed the ashes of "Carac of the Grail."

It was but a few days after Carac's burial that Mira's brother arrived at "*Dinas Bran.*" "Rold of the Golden Fleece," though saddened in mien, maintained the poise which was natural to him.

The calamity which had overthrown the kingdom of the *Iceni*, and caused the tragic death of his late royal patroness, were to his mind the overrulings of a power which he did not question. All that was, was right, or it would not have been suffered, was the sum of Rold's creed.

In a conversation with Mira a few days after reaching *Dinas Bran*, he asked tenderly, "What will my little sister do now?" for they had been

speaking of the future, and he realized how completely this double affliction had bereft Mira.

While to him was still left his profession as a bard, in which his whole heart was enlisted; she had been suddenly deprived of all those interests which had given a zest to her life.

"At first I was wicked and rebellious that they were taken and I was left. I did not want to live." said Mira. "But if I am to do so I will stay here with the old Chieftain. He has no one belonging to him, and he would miss me sorely were I to leave him now. Besides, where would I go?" she added sadly.

So it was arranged that she should remain at the castle; and there we will leave Mira to cheer as best she might the remaining days of the old Chief who was the last of the Raven-line."

We will only add, there is a tradition of a beautiful woman dwelling within the walls of this once famous fortress, sole mistress and lady of the castle, who in her deep seclusion was as unapproachable as she was unsusceptible to the wooings of a poet lover.

The latter has left evidence in verse of his passion, and of the lady's insensibility to his addresses. Two lines tell the whole story, though the writer is effusive in his declarations of the unapproachableness of his goddess.

"Oh, fairer far, but colder thou
Than new-fall'n snow on Aran's brow."

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